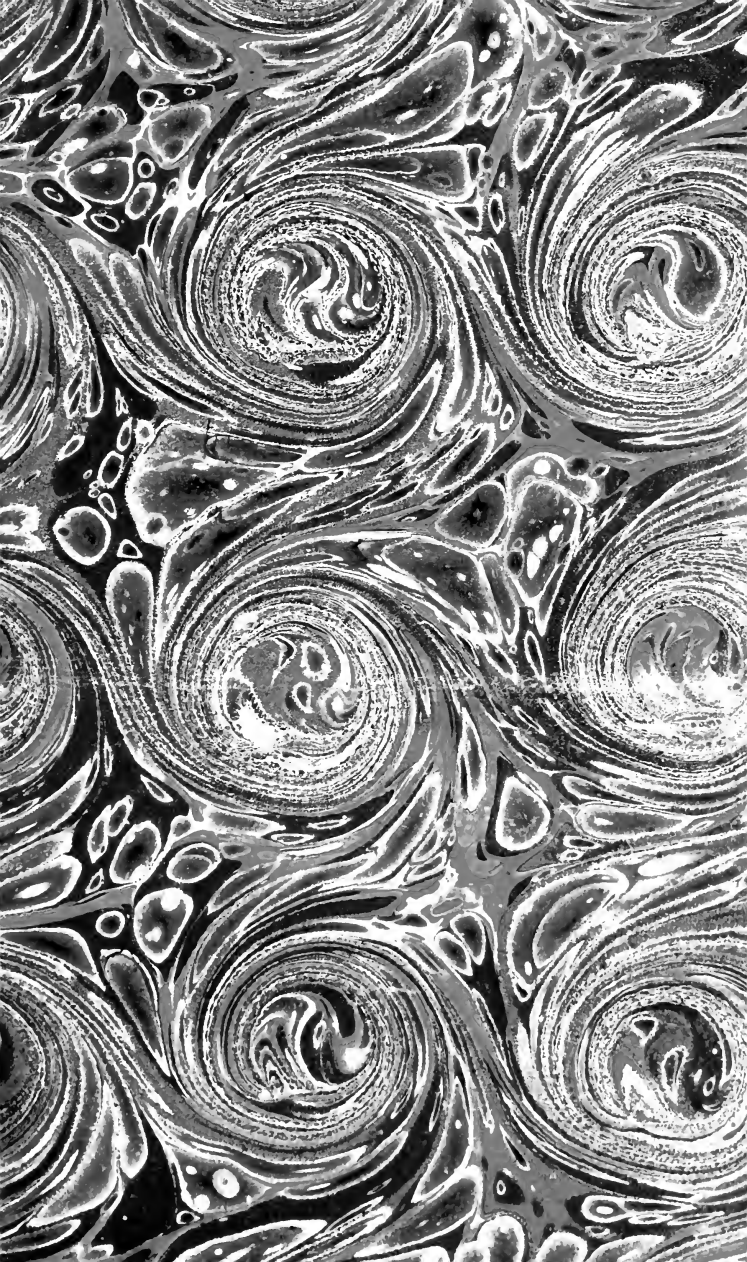




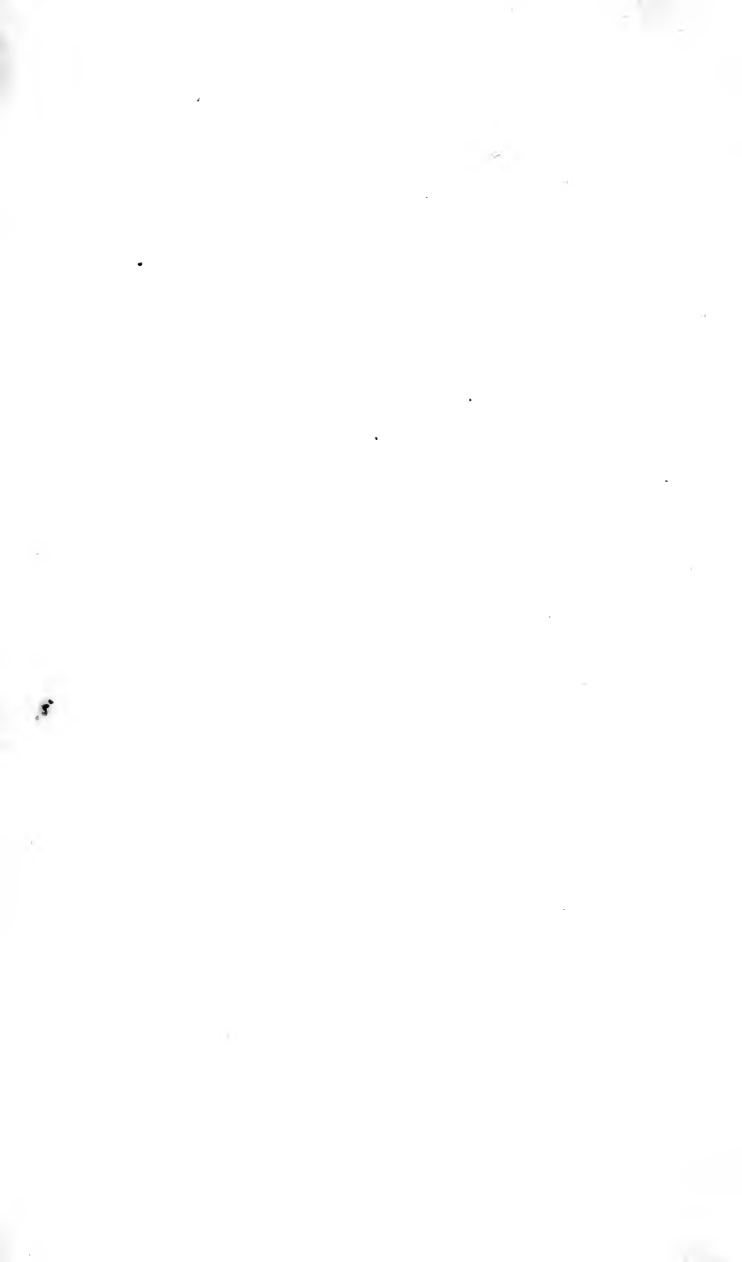
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THE
DOMINIE'S LEGACY.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "THE SECTARIAN."

The old man travelled far, both north and south,
And mickle did he see, and mickle hear;
And left the fruits to them wha like to read.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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MARY OGILVIE.

VOL. II.

B

MARY OGILVIE.

A TALE OF THE SQUIRE'S EXPERIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Come, Jaques, and I will show thee faithfully,
How mid the sottish circles of this world
Still there are heads that think, and hearts that feel,
And love ; who find love's warm requiting answer
Strike to their inmost core. How my heart glows
With joyaunce at the thought !

Scrap Stanzas.

“So, this is my sweet Lillybrae at last !” I said to myself, as I mounted the height, and glanced round upon the quiet dwelling, and all that I so well remembered.

“There is certainly nothing remarkable about it after all,” was the chilling exclamation which my near approach to the domicile and its rural appurtenances, which my imagination had so often

pictured to me, when far distant, as one of the most interesting spots on earth, called forth. The time of the day when I had arrived was late; it was towards evening—and it was the autumn period of the year. I thought the farm had a bare, cold, look; and seemed now, from its mean exterior and sequestered situation, the very seat of an exiled and insipid retirement; of an existence without variety, and almost without enjoyment. How could my imagination have dwelt upon such a commonplace object! It was nothing but a plain farmhouse, with its roomy kitchen, its little parlour, and its inner spence,—its barns and outhouses, with a small garden at one end, and a clump of corn-stacks in the rear.

The wind blew chill in my face as I turned up the hill towards it. I thought it looked bleak and barren; and I had just learned at the inn, on my way, that “bonnie Mary Ogilvie,” its only interesting inmate, was on the eve of marriage with a young farmer in the neighbourhood; and of course it was folly in me to concern myself about the house or her.

But I looked to the right as I went musing onward, and *there* still remained the identical Lillyburn wood, where Mary and I used to wander, and to pick cowslips and gather blackberries, when we were children; and there was still the little green broomy hill, behind which I used to watch for her, when she grew tall and modest, and would not look at me when any one was by. But the hill seemed, after all, only a bare and withered knoll; I thought the wood looked now diminutive and scattered, as the trees whistled mournfully in the wind: and my heart smote me with a conviction of the instability of our dearest enjoyments.

I passed on, somewhat sadly, listening to the cold breeze sighing through the firs, until I came to a small rude bridge, and I stopped in the midst of it, and looking down the stream, contemplated the little rushy linn, or pool, wherein I used to fish, and where Mary used to watch by my side; and it was her delight, to take the speckled trout gently off the hook, and to throw them back into the linn, for she said, "To kill the pretty fluttering fish would teach me to be cruel, and she could not

bear to see them gasping in agony on the grass, while we ourselves were so happy." Long ago, I now remembered, when Mary and I used to wade, bare-footed, in that lovely stream, the sun gleaming like gold on the surface; and we were wont to watch the little waves, as they formed running shadows on the clear sandy bottom; but many a sea and stream have I looked upon since, though on none so charming as this seemed then. As I continued to look musingly down its windings, I repeated to myself the beautiful stanza of Burns', which has become hackneyed on account of its very expressiveness:

" We twa hae paidled in the burn,
When summer days were fine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sinn the days o' lang syne."

But the days of wading are now no more, and Lillyburn seems but a paltry rivulet, and Mary Ogilvie is about to be another's after all, and—

"Pshaw!" I exclaimed to myself, after a pause of some time, and at the same instant hitting my horse smartly with my whip, without the least oc-

casion or intention; "this is all childishness and folly. I am sure I have seen enough of life to put all such romance out of my head."

The stroke I had given my horse made it start off at a speed that would have brought me to my own home in a few minutes; but as I approached close to Lillybrae House, after saying these words, I checked the startled animal, and passed nearer to the windows than I should probably have done, had no such wise speech been uttered. Fortunately I did not seem to be observed. The night might be chill without, but the fire blazed cheerfully within, and I could see the servants busy at their work in the large and convenient kitchen.

I passed close to the house, slowly, and in watchful silence, for the road swept by one end of it. I observed a door standing open. I stopped, and listening a few moments, heard a voice; it was a woman's, and, like a strain of former years, sounded home to my heart. I was all ear, for I could see nothing of her from whom the voice proceeded; and like those who have been born blind,

upon *sound* was fastened on the instant my whole soul and attention.

The voice was Mary Ogilvie's, now in the fullness of womanhood; and it was so musical—so rich—so feminine—so heartily innocent, as I thought—so purely, yet pleasingly, Scotch!

“And are ye sure ye saw him? that it was Mr. George himsel?” she said. “How does he look? Did ye hear him speak?”

“Yes,” answered another female voice; “he was asking at the waiter o’ the inn, what was the news o’ a’ the neighbourhood.”

Mary hastily inquired, “Who did he ask for? He wadna speer for our folk or for me—Did he?” Then checking herself, she added; “He would be dressed grand nae doubt. Had he a proud look?” My horse made a slight noise; I heard the females start within, and then Mary’s voice exclaim; “Gude sake! there’s somebody—look!” I struck the spur into my horse’s sides, and was at my father’s gate before I recovered from the agitated feeling caused by this simple incident.

The congratulations and inquiries of my rela-

tives put Mary Ogilvie almost out of my thoughts, until I had retired to bed. As soon, however, as my head was laid on that pillow on which I had slept from childhood, until my departure for those remote scenes from which I now so gladly had returned; solitude, and the circumstances of my arrival, after a long absence, awakened all my recollections, and drew the past and present fully before me.

My father's connections in Edinburgh and the East of Scotland were very good, but his property in this neighbourhood was very small. Neighbouring proprietors lived at some distance from us, and consisted chiefly of the upstart vulgar, who assumed a jealous stateliness, but had no dignity, and who having little accomplishment of mind, possess the coarseness and barrenness of the lower class, without their simple good feeling, plain sense, and warmth of heart; we, therefore, associated but little with any of them. The family of the Ogilvies, however, were much superior to all the farmers round. Mary's mother had been educated in Edinburgh, to expectations much higher

than the rank of a middling farmer's wife; and Mary, herself, surpassed much in accomplishments, and more in beauty, all the farmers' daughters or ladies that I knew. I could not keep from her society, almost from my childhood; and I loved her, as children differing in rank are sometimes permitted to love, because nature is irresistible, and early passion unspeakably delightful. The love of the innocent has little reference to *circumstance*, that "unspiritual god"—that capricious distributor of the good and evil of life—that tyrannical separator of those whom nature has joined together; and the love of the young has little reference to the many things in human passion and weakness, of which they are as yet pleasingly ignorant, and which after-life is unhappily to develop. We had separated just when she was becoming more shy, from a feeling of inferiority in *circumstances*; and when, with regard to myself, future prospects and foreign novelties began to dance before my imagination, and to drive from my thoughts my pretty blue-eyed Mary Ogilvie.

I had now returned from "seeing the world;"

from that necessary preparation for the craft of advancement, an experience of the heartlessness of polished society, and some knowledge of the intricacies of human selfishness. But Mary Ogilvie had continued on the spot where she was born; was about to marry one in her own simple sphere, to let out the affections of her heart upon her husband and children, and likely to remain ignorant of the many bitter discoveries which are made in the process of building advancement in fortune upon "knowledge of the world."

Next morning I found my mind more calm, and I strove wisely to reason myself into a reconciliation with the loss of the object of my early love. I contrasted the supposed prospects of *my* life with the dulness of *hers*, or of that of a simple country gentleman, as I might be, united to her; ridiculed the idea of boyish love interfering with a man's career in life, thought of the excitements of dissipation, and anticipated the triumphs of personal distinction.

My mind was so occupied with these thoughts, that I was more taciturn at breakfast, with my

father and other relatives, than was at all consistent with the happiness I had expressed on arriving once more among them. Before we rose, a country carle was introduced, to wit, Mary Ogilvie's father. He came forward with patriarchal manliness, and, grasping my hand into his hard fist, congratulated me on my safe return; saying also, that he hoped the good had not been driven out of me among foreign gentles; and that I had not exchanged Scotch plainness for foreign affectation, nor Scotch piety for foreign vice. I assured the old man, that I valued, too highly, many things which belonged to home to throw them away for so unworthy an equivalent; and added, that although I had, doubtless, left a portion of my early innocence behind me, I had gone abroad for improvement, and hoped I had not altogether missed my aim.

“ I have a message for you from our Mary,” he said, gravely; and, taking me aside, “ she is about to be married to Mr. Blair, of Craiglands, their booking is to take place this night, an' ye must come down to Lillybrae, as an early friend, for

Mary's sake, an' see her booked. Now ye'll come early, Mr. George, and see Mary, for auld lang-syne. I've seen the day when I wadna hae liked to carry to you the news o' her marriage to another; but it's no for the pet lamb to company wi' the proud stag; and poortith often parts gude company."

When the old man was gone, I could not help feeling surprised at my own weakness, and at the little effect of my recent prudent reasoning; for, although I never had seriously thought of marrying Mary Ogilvie myself, nor suspected that my early love for her amounted to any thing like a passion that should disturb my peace, or mar my fortune, I now felt, at the idea of her being for ever given to the arms of another, a pang, which was like tearing my heart asunder. I debated with myself whether I should go to Lillybrae early in the evening, and see Mary alone; but, at length, decided in the negative; for, I thought, whatever affection there might be between us, we had evidently different destinies in life; and, as I did not mean to interrupt her marriage with the farmer,

our meeting alone, and recurring to early scenes, would be a trial to our feelings, unnecessarily painful, if not dangerous.

I, therefore, went late*; and, when I again drew near to the house, I became so affected with my recollections and present feelings, that I deliberated whether I should turn back, and not go at all, or else seek an interview with Mary, and offer to make her my own bride. I stopped on the threshold of the door, thus debating with myself. “This indecision,” I at length said, “is the evidence of a weak mind, and I have something else to do in life besides gratifying a juvenile passion. I *will* go in, and be witness of the marriage of Mary Ogilvie.”

Her father received me at the door with patriarchal solemnity, and I found the persons expected already assembled. I went boldly forward, with the air of the Squire, who countenances, by his presence, the marriage of one of his tenants. Mary

* At the time when this marriage took place, it was quite customary for the Squire to attend the weddings and funerals of his respected tenants.

stepped across the room gracefully, and met me with warmth; but humility and reserve seemed to struggle in her bosom, with other feelings; and the dignity and distance I assumed seemed to relieve her, and to prompt her to the manner most fitting the occasion. She introduced to me her intended husband, a fair faced, farmer-looking youth, with modesty; and a little conversation between us, concerning the countries abroad which I had visited, and the scenes I had witnessed since I had been an inhabitant of these valleys, tended to relieve mutual embarrassment, and to allow the business for which we had met to proceed agreeably. My anxiety to hide my feelings, however, induced changes in my manner, which would have made me appear ridiculous in any other company more capable of observing it: for as my first reserve threw a restraint on all present, unfavourable to their enjoying the social pleasure for which they had met, my subsequent jocular freedom, if not even familiarity, was, I believe, as out of character as it was unexpected.

The first proceeding in a regular marriage in.

Scotland, is the booking. In country parts, the parties, with a few of their young friends, meet usually in some public-house, if not in that of the parents of the bridegroom, and send for the Session clerk, (the person who keeps the parish register), who inserts their names in his book, previous to his publishing the bans of marriage in the church. This meeting is not unfrequently the most generally agreeable of all those occasioned by the marriage; for it is like one of those pleasures which steal upon us unawares, without being too dearly bought by preparation; and not having been previously devoured by extravagant expectation, is less apt to turn to bitterness and disappointment.

On the occasion of a rural booking, there is no preparation,—no feasting, no ceremonious rivalry, no restraint from the presence, of even the parents of the parties. It is a meeting of two lovers, and their companions of both sexes, in whose presence they take the first public step towards the accomplishment of their vows by marriage; and these last are generally also young men and their sweet-

hearts, who may themselves soon meet for the same object. The dress of those "bidden to the booking," is "set in order;" perhaps, but little changed: no finery appears; but blithe faces and light hearts are there; for it is the season of youth, love, and hope: the cares of after-life do not trouble their joyous dreams, and little has yet occurred to any of them to infuse sourness into the cup of existence. It is much like Hallowe'en night, as described by Burns:

" The lasses feat, and cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine ;
Their faces blith, fu' sweetly kyth ;
Hearts leal, an' warm, and kin'."

A Scotch booking is truly a meeting of love and confidence; for the principal party pledge themselves to each other, as future husband and wife in presence of their young friends; and indulge with less reserve in the innocent playfulness of fondness, so natural to light-hearted youth in the season of courtship. The other pairs present, invariably catch the contagion of love from the bride and bridegroom; the females resign them-

selves with less reserve to their lovers ; and kind feelings and *leal* hearts, make a booking night be often referred back to in after days, among the sad hours which may be experienced,

“ When youth and genial years are flown,
And all the *life* of life is gone.”

Nothing could be more simple than Mary Ogilvie's dress this evening. The utmost neatness and grace in her apparel was obtained by its being merely fitted to her form, without the smallest artifice : a form which now swelled in the delicate fulness of womanhood. Her hair was confined with a simple snood, in the old Scotch fashion,—its flowing profusion was tied fancifully over her head ; and her eyes sparkled with a modest, yet seductive expression, which sent a kind of death to my heart.

In truth, I dared not to look at her ; and when I observed that every other male person present had his mate, who reciprocated his feelings, and received gratefully his whisper of love, and that I was an isolated being, who might sit there as a

spectator of the happiness of others, and wrap myself up, if I pleased, in the consciousness of my gentility, and look on to see Mary Ogilvie in the arms of another! I groaned inwardly from the pain of the struggle with my feelings. I now began to think it unwise, if not cruel in Mary, to invite me to her booking; but again I reflected, that the day had been appointed previous to my return home; and that she had requested me to meet here before the arrival of the others, no doubt to give me an opportunity of preventing her marriage in my own favour, if I had so chosen. I saw clearly that it was *I* that was to blame; for she evidently felt embarrassed as well as myself. The ardent admiration of her intended husband she treated with kindness, but by no means appeared to return it with that heartiness and feeling which would have been felt towards the husband of her choice, by such a girl as Mary.

The clerk soon attended with his book; upon which the customary refreshment was handed round: and the laugh and joke, not always the most refined, but not the less hearty and joyous,

circulated freely. The names were about to be entered, when some one, in a humorous way, objected to the business proceeding in the place where we were; asked if it was ever heard of, that a booking was finished in a private house? and proposed, that all present should proceed in a body to Mrs. M'Glashan's change-house, in the Clachan, and attend to the business in an orderly way, as our fathers had done before us; that it might not hereafter be said, that Craighlands and his lady-like bride,* had been married with less ceremony than was used with the least farmers in the country.

This proposal having been seconded with great alacrity by all the men present, they soon persuaded the females to prepare to go to the Clachan, only a mile distant, to finish the booking. The company, consisting of eight couple, besides myself and the Session Clerk, soon rose, and set forth to cross the fields towards the Clachan. The night was fine, but chill. Most of the girls wore cloaks;

* In Scotland, persons are designated bride and bridegroom, from the time they are booked until the marriage.

and as they and the young men walked in pairs in the dark, they drew close together, excusing themselves by the cold ; and soon the girls allowed their partners to share their cloaks, while each man for convenience, put his arm round his lass's neck ; and thus they walked on, whispering and laughing to each other, in all the warm confidence of innocent country love.

To the whole party walking onwards to the Clachan, this was probably the happiest portion of the evening. It was very different with me. I was the only youth of all who was without a female companion, and was forced to walk behind the happy couples, along with the chattering old clerk, for want of better company. Few situations could, in my present state of mind, have been more trying to my feelings ! · There was my own Mary Ogilvie, whose form and early fascination had still haunted my imagination in many distant lands, now walking in the embrace of another, and about to be his for life ! while I went after them a condescending spectator, stifling my cherished love : yet totally uncertain as to my des-

tiny in life, and for what I was making all this sacrifice.

I saw, however, that I was taking life, and the comparative good to be found in its different situations upon the word of others ; and had not experience of my own to enable me to judge, whether the prospects or chances of fortune, which I imagined lay before me, were in reality a good so certain and so preferable, as that they ought to induce me to crush the feelings of my heart, and to forego the certain and quiet bliss of an undistinguished life in the arms of Mary Ogilvie. In the course of this walk behind the booking party, all the former conflict in my mind was aroused and renewed. I felt humbled in my own eyes at my irresolution, as I sometimes blamed myself for heartless pride, in preferring uncertain ambitious views, city demoralization, city show, folly, and dissipation, to unaffected love, humble virtue, purity, and peace ! Again I thought that I ought to have more spirit than to marry a farmer's daughter, without fortune ; perhaps to waste my days in country se-

clusion, growing my crops, and rearing calves and children.—So wayward is the heart of man, and so little does he know what is good for him in the present life.

When we arrived at Mrs. M'Glashan's public house in the Clachan, and I was ushered in with many congees, along with the booking party, and seated in "the big room," and when, in process of time, the good people had taken a hearty draught of "the Clachan yill," the happiness, fun, and hilarity enjoyed by all, diverted my anxiety, and I could not help joining in the loud laugh; and comparing, with a sigh, the unaffected and hearty enjoyment of these country people with the stately nothingness, the insipidity, formality, and heartlessness, the envy, emulations, and humiliating chagrins which so mix with, and embitter the glittering pleasures of "good society."

Mary Ogilvie, however, was evidently rather striving to be happy than really feeling so; and she seemed to return her lover's looks of extreme fondness rather with a sentiment of gratitude for

his preference, than as at all reciprocating what he evidently felt. She made a few brief inquiries of me, respecting the things I had seen in my travels, and endeavoured to converse with ease; but she was, in general, silent and abstracted; and as she at times, under the influence of some half stifled emotion, turned her blue eyes upon mine, they sent a feeling home to my heart that was almost intolerable.

The names of Mary and her husband having been registered in the parish book, the healths of the bridegroom and bride duly drank, and the arrangements for the wedding agreed upon, I rose, and left the party; in a state of mind in which there was little of self esteem or gratulation, and not little of present suffering, and the painful feeling of future uncertainty. The wedding was not to take place for three weeks after, that the banns might be published three successive Sundays in the kirk; and, in the interim, I gladly availed myself of an occasion to visit Edinburgh, to divert my mind, and confirm me in the resolution of

forgetting Mary Ogilvie. I returned from my journey just in time to hear her marriage proclaimed for the last time in the church, and to be reminded of her invitation to the wedding, which was to take place on the following Tuesday.

CHAPTER II.

ON the Monday night following, being the one previous to that of the wedding, the same parties who had attended at the booking met at Lillybrae, to perform the ceremony of the washing of the feet, and throwing of the stocking, agreeable to ancient custom. I had no particular invitation to this meeting, but yet I determined to go, from the same kind of self-tormenting impulse, which induces us often to place ourselves in the way of things in life, only calculated to pain our feelings, or to make us melancholy.

When I arrived at Lillybrae in the evening, and entered the apartment where Mary Ogilvie was, I perceived a degree of distance, or rather a pride and dignity in her manner of addressing me, that affected me keenly, as conveying a reproach to myself, and as a natural expression on her part, of what she felt at my avoiding her in private, and

my apparent apathy at her marriage with another. This was a love meeting, like the former; but, for some cause or other, there seemed to be much more of seriousness and sentiment over it than on the former occasion.

The serious feeling, and reflective moralizing of the uncontaminated Scotch character seemed now to shine out through occasional and characteristic roughness, and checked the buoyant flow of their national humour this evening, by solemn and somewhat religious impressions. There was that grave sedateness in the countenances of the bride and bridegroom, which indicated an impression of the importance of the step they were about to take, and which was partaken of by the rest of the company; who, in the language of the prophet and king, seemed in a proper mood to—"join trembling with their mirth." The company assembled seemed to feel this night to be the last in which their interesting friend Mary, and the youth whom she had accepted for a husband, were to belong to themselves, for that now they were to be separated from all who were yet left behind to the uncertain

chances of the single state, and were to be united for life; were entering into the bonds, and engaging with the cares of marriage, for better or for worse, and for all the sweets and bitters which were reserved for them in futurity; and which should make up the draught of mature life.

These feelings were not a little deepened by the presence and occasional remarks of Mary's father, who looked with the anxious eye of experience upon the commencement, to one so dear to him, of so lasting an undertaking. He sat in an old-fashioned great chair, on one side of the capacious chimney, and opposite to his daughter and the bridegroom; while the rest of the company formed a circle round the large oaken-table.—There was a solemnity, and even something like majesty, in the look of the old carle, a reverend bald-headed man, with the rugged weather-worn features of a Scotch farmer; but which carried a strong impression of sense and benevolence.

The conversation was cheerful but not gay; and there were long pauses, during which the young men looked in the faces of their partners, and

whispered; and all watched the countenance of the old man, and seemed to expect some expression of his feelings on the important occasion of the marriage of his daughter. The carle did not obtrude himself, however, until one Robin Gibb, a “wild loon,” whom nothing could make serious, made some ludicrous observation, and accompanied it with a burst of half suppressed laughter.

Every one else present seemed to feel a kind of shock at this unseasonable merriment! a solemn pause ensued, while all eyes were turned to the reverend face of the old man. At length, looking round him indulgently, and then in the faces of the bridegroom and bride, he thus feelingly addressed his company.

“I am well pleased to see young folks merry when they meet; for youth is the season of joy and hope, and disappointment and sorrow will soon enough arrive: but, Sirs, marriage is a serious covenant, and not to be treated as a joke, mair than ony other serious step in life, where the consequences extend through many years. Now, happiness and love are in your thoughts through the

day, and in your dreams through the night : but life is not all pleasure ; many heartless days and tedious nights may be to come ; and from marriage to the grave there may many things occur between twa frail mortals, that may be sair to thole.

“ But I dinna wish to dishearten you, bairns,” he continued ; “ I am weel pleased wi’ your marriage. And, Mary, my bonnie daughter, thou’s gaun to be accountable to another, an’ from under my care. Be loving and obedient to thy gudeman, as thy dear mother was to me ; and, as she is now gone, dinna let even thy duty to thy new connection allow thee to forget or cause thee to neglect thy auld widowed father ;—for I am now a lone man in the world ; and auld folk are weak, an’ a bairn’s neglect is a sore trial to a doting parent— an’ thou’s all I hae to comfort me in my solitary age ; an’ thee and thine are all that tie me to this earth !”

Mary, whom I had watched, struggling with her feelings, now burst out into tears, at this solemn appeal of her father ; and I could scarcely contain myself, as on looking round the company

I observed the young women looking up into the serious faces of their own sweethearts, while the large tears streamed down their cheeks.

“Gie me thy hand, Mary, my love, and dinna greet,” continued the old man, “for thou’s all my hope; an’ I know thou’ll be a kind daughter to me, as long as I am spared in this sinfu’ world. And now, Sirs,” he added, wiping his face, and looking round, “excuse the weakness and strong affection of an old man; and remember my words, an’ dinna expect owre mickle frae the world, for it’s full o’ deceit; but seek God to guide you, and think soberly.” He found himself affected, and rose to retire. No one could speak. “Gude night, Sirs,” he added, “make yourselves happy; and I hope we’ll all meet again on the morn, at Mary’s marriage, in peace and with a blessing.”

The seriousness of the company was deepened by this affecting exhibition of the feelings of the widowed farmer, and of his only daughter; and as the young men now looked grave, and spoke at intervals, the eyes of the females glistened with sentiment, in sympathy with the thoughts of the

principal pair and the old man, whose present feelings they applied, by anticipation, to themselves. They had witnessed one of those involuntary gushes of gathered fraternal sentiment—that artless pouring forth of our dearest and tenderest affections, which gives to simple minds such pure and melting pleasure.

They now began to illustrate their thoughts, by telling sad tales, and referring to tragic events; mixing their serious discourse with traditionary histories of hapless love, wayward fortunes, and broken hearts. A youth called Cunningham, who had more the appearance of a student of Divinity than a farmer, told, with much effect, a tale of his neighbourhood, of a marriage without love; and to the smothering of love for another, which was soon followed by a burial, and by tears and lamentations. As the company were musing on the tragic story, he called upon his sweetheart, who sat thoughtfully by his side, to sing them an old ballad, called “The Flower of Avonwood Lee,” which he said he had often made her sing to him when she was a “wee wee lassie, because he delighted to see her greet at a waefu’ tale.”

The young man's sweetheart was a laughing dark-eyed girl, and it was almost incredible the transition which now appeared from her habitual look of lightness and *fun*, to the artlessly tragical expression which, under the influence of present feeling, lengthened her countenance and swam in her speaking black eye. Without the least hesitation or attempt to excuse herself, the girl, giving a shrill hem and extending one foot a little, to beat the time, she, to an old Gaelic air, which had little in it but a mountain wildness and plaintive expression, sang, in a sort of recitative, the following rude rhyme :

O, did ye e'er hear of bonnie Alleen,
The flower of Avonwood lee ?
And did ye e'er hear of her brothers brave,
Wha fought by the Warlock Tree ?
And did ye e'er hear of Todscloff Tower,
That frowns o'er the dashing tide ?
Or of gallant Graeme, its stately lord,
The Lothian's boast and pride ?

The bonnie Alleen sat in her bower ;
And, O, she was fair to see,
For her skin was white, and her een were bright
As the stars in the lift sae hie.

Now the gallant Graeme was a hunting then,
And he's stepped her bower within ;
And he's doff'd his cap, and he's bent his knee,
Her heart's true love to win.

And they hae met by the moon's yellow light,
And he's kiss'd her beneath the tree :
“ O, come wi' me, my pretty Alleen,
And the Lady Graeme you shall be !”
He blew a blast, till glen and shaw
Pour'd out his merry men bold ;
And they've placed her on a milk-white steed,
And borne her to Todsliff hold.

O, long she has sat in Todsliff Tower,
And a weary wife was she,
For the Graeme was proud, and his friends were great,
And their faces she dar'd na see.
And the sea-maw skreight wild o'er the black castle wa',
And the waves below dash'd wearilie ;
And she thought o' her hame and her brothers brave,
And the bonnie braes of Avonwood lee.

A lady gay had come down from the south,
With riches and jewels most precious to see :
“ O, leeze me,” she said, “ on the gallant Graeme ;
For I'm won with the glance of his bright black ee !”
So he's ta'en her east, and he's ta'en her west,
And he's feasted her in ha' and bower ;
But little has he thought on his bonnie dame,
That mourn'd in gloomy Todsliff Tower.

Then the merry bells did ring, and the tapers did blaze,
When he wedded the southern lady gay :
But a weird voice was heard, 'boon the revelrie,
Saying, " Woe to the Graeme for the deed done this day ! "

* * * * *

O mirk was the night, and fearful the storm,
When they pu'd Alleen frae her lonely bed ;
And piercingly she shriek'd, and the water spirit laugh'd,
As the green sea swirled o'er her bonnie head !
For they hae drown'd the bonnie Alleen ;
And nae mair shall she chaunt by Avonwood lee :
And her brothers hae slain the cruel Graeme,
Where his ghost still howls by the Warlock Tree.

The way this tragical tale was sung, and the present mood of the company, made it be listened to with the most eager interest by all ; and none seemed to hang on the words of it with more intense feeling than Mary Ogilvie herself, who obviously applied it to her own case. When it was ended, and as her husband asked her if the song had affected her, she replied something which I could not hear, but which was spoken with an eye and voice bespeaking that suppressed emotion and mellow kindness which seemed to say, " I will try to love you, for you deserve it, and it is my

duty ! and it is fearful dangerous for an humble maiden to think of any one above her own condition."

During the time the ballad was warbled forth by the black-eyed girl, who mournfully drew out some of the passages, and was occasionally joined by the plaintive psalmody voices of some of the other females in a way never to be done but by a native of these parts, I enjoyed that high delight which is felt in calling up and renewing early emotions and associations ; for, as some of the females still let their tears out with the unchecked simplicity of pure nature, the simple notes of the girl touched my heart with the fresh sensations of childhood ; and I was transported back to the cloudless and imaginative morning of life !

Soon after this, as the night wore on, Mary Ogilvie rose ; and, accompanied by the other females of the company, proceeded to her own apartment, where the necessary conveniences were ready for the washing of her feet. Water was also placed in the room where the men remained, for the washing of the feet of the bridegroom. I did not

remain, however, to witness this part of the ceremony, nor even the throwing of the stocking; but dropping off in the bustle, like a discontented intruder as I was, I wandered sadly home in the dark, and soon crept up in a dissatisfied, if not misanthropic spirit, to my own solitary chamber!

Next morning I appeared at breakfast at my father's table, already dressed more gay than usual, preparatory to the wedding. Some lady visitors, as well as my father, rallied me very unmercifully on my nuptial engagements among the farmers, and on my thoughtful countenance in the midst of all these doings. They all affected to sympathize with me, and to condole much with me for the loss of my country beauty! My father protested, that I ought to have sent a challenge to my farmer rival at least; and the ladies proposed getting up and putting in rehearsal some drama, or appropriate piece, such as the story of Boaz and Ruth, by way of a marriage entertainment.

To me, all this banter was far from agreeable: sacred as I deemed the feelings of love to be, and seriously, after all, as this event might influence

my peace and happiness. I rose from the table, and though the marriage party were not to assemble until noon, finding myself unable to enjoy society, or my own studies, I rambled forth, to kill the time, until I involuntarily found myself on the farm of Lillybrae, and near to the scene of the approaching wedding.

After descending the hill, I wandered on without any intention, and into the little irregular mass of scattered planting, called Lillyburn Wood, where Mary and I had so often strayed in our infancy ; my mind completely absorbed in stating to myself the *pros* and *cons*, and collecting the comparisons and probabilities of happiness, had I married her, with what I might reasonably anticipate in the prospects which seemed before me. I went on conning over the advices and lectures which had lately been bestowed upon me by an experienced friend, and now concluded sensibly with him, that love was a species of disease of the feelings, very natural at my period of life, and could scarcely be escaped by a mind of some sensitiveness, as mine was, and liable of course to

impressions from every object combining beauty of form and warmth of sentiment, such as were often most seductively united in a beautiful and romantic female. I considered with my sensible friend, that of the pleasures of life, those of love, however delightful, formed but a part, and that liable to a thousand interruptions, and open to a thousand vexations; and at best, like all passions, it tended to its own decay: that should I give way to, and gratify this passion at this early period of my life, it would be, in all probability, at the expense of many other natural desires, and the forfeiting of other enjoyments, as well as to the interrupting of many duties, which my education and situation in the world seemed to demand of me; and finally, that I might at a fitter period, and in circumstances more generally suitable, become as much attached to some other female more calculated as a companion for me in the enjoyment of those elegancies to which my fortune might entitle me.

At every step in this wise reasoning, I thought myself gaining strength to overcome my juvenile

folly, my long cherished love fit, when turning round the foot of the green mound I have mentioned, I heard steps tripping softly on the grass, and instantly after was met full in the face by Mary Ogilvie.

Our start, at first, was nothing ; the colour, that mounted into both our faces, was only what might have been expected ; but we both seemed to have lost our strength in an instant : and, for myself, it was the beating of my heart, as I looked at her in her white wedding dress, and, as I saw the effect that the same observation of me had upon her, that totally disconcerted me, and almost took away my breath.

We continued to gaze upon each other for a little time, as in mutual astonishment, why we should have individually come hither, and met on this morning, on the most treasured scene of our early love. I held out my hands to her instinctively. She seemed to recover herself, and gave me hers, in a manner which would express the frank confidence of the early friend, yet mixing with the humility of the consciousness of her

relative situation now, and the modest confusion of the bride. She said something, expressing surprise at my being so far from home at this hour, and at finding me lingering about this spot; but, without waiting for my reply, she began to account for herself being here in the wood, by saying that, while the servants were busy, making preparations for the expected company, she had strolled abroad, to be out of the way, and had wandered thus far.

I stood gazing on her as she confusedly told this story, still holding her hands, and replied, with more of passion than wisdom, that she needed not be thus particular in giving me an account of herself; and that the time was, when she would not have thought of making excuses for meeting me in this wood. She looked at me with surprise when I had uttered this speech, as well she might; and, withdrawing her hands, she began to say, “Ay, and *I* have seen the day, Mr. George, when ——” and her heart seemed to fill at her own thoughts.

“When what, Mary?” I said, as she paused.

“Speak! I love to hear you speak as you used long ago.”

“When,” she answered, “I would not have needed to make excuses for meeting you in any place; and when, if it had been told me, that ye would hae been absent frae the howms of Lillybrae for years and years, and that ye came back without ever asking to see me, or speak to me, as ye used to do, if it were na mair,” she added, mournfully, “but to gar me greet, by talking to me of our happiness when we were bairns, I wadna hae believed them; and if ye really like to hear me speak as I did langsyne,” she went on, her voice trembling as she spoke, “what for did ye not come to Lillybrae and speak to me, George?”

This last sentence was spoken in a tone so affecting, and with a look up into my face of such appealing expression, that it smote me to the soul with agonizing conviction of injustice, and even cruelty to her, and took from me the power of giving utterance to the excuse which I meditated. I hesitated and stammered. “Mary Ogilvie,” I at length said, “I cannot now tell you all the

reasons ; but, believe me, my heart was not in them, Mary. I denied myself much, much in not seeing you at least to talk of former happier days : but I learned that you were about to be married to a young man, of whom your father approved ; and I knew not but that you might have forgotten me and our early love. And you know, Mary," I continued, taking both her hands again and looking into her eyes, " we have other things to do in life than idling about these bonnie woods, picking primroses and reading love tales ; for the scenes of early youth are but like a dream, and pass quickly away, and the feelings may be very different in after years. But *my* heart, assuredly, was not in fault, Mary ; I have not forgotten these days, nor this pretty bank, nor your lovely blue eyes and golden locks, nor the 'day when we wandered to the Craigs of Glenvee—nor—you are in tears, Mary ; I did not mean to pain you."

" Oh, George !" said she, while the tears fell fast from her swimming eyes, " how can you speak so to me now, and not a word until my very wedding day ! and yet, I know you do not mean to

pain me ; I know your warm heart, but you'll be designed for some grand lady, and I never should have thought about the like of you."

As I was about to reply, she took her hand from mine, and, holding it up before my mouth, exclaimed, " Now, dinna speak nae mair to me, George ! dinna talk to me of bygone days, I canna bear it the day, for I'm but a weak woman, and I am gaun to be married to a youth of my ain station ; but yet—now, dinna speak !"

" One word more, Mary," I said, completely overpowered, " and then forget ——"

" I canna forget ! No, I winna forget !" she exclaimed, with a look of despair, " Farewell, George !" and she tried to get away.

" Will you leave me that way, Mary ?" I said, almost calmly : " it is our last meeting, as remembered lovers, the very last in this wood." I drew her to me, she fell into my arms, our tears mingled, she broke from me after a sob or two, staggered with agitation as she glided off round the foot of the green mound, leaving me like one in the midst of a dream. I stood stockstill for some moments,

in the bewilderment of shuddering agitation ; then, throwing myself on the soft turf, to recover my feelings, I pondered on the shortness of those scenes that live longest in our remembrance, and on the fewness of those illumined pages of the book of life, which are more precious to the heart, and dearer to the imagination, than all the rest of the dull and blotted volume.

CHAPTER III.

I STILL lay reclining upon the side of the green hill, musing on the thousand circumstances which stand in the way of our enjoying the highest draught of delight with which our existence is furnished, and the few and distant angel visits of pure and glowing passion that are vouchsafed to us amid the "waste of wearisome hours," which renders oblivious to the memory, when past, so great a portion of life; and was still dwelling in imagination upon the regretful and beseeching expression of Mary Ogilvie's eyes, as they had lately glistened on me through her tears, and still thought I felt her warm kiss burning on my lips, for my nerves had not yet recovered from the searching throb of that exquisite moment, and I felt exhausted from the hurry of my spirits and the high excitement of the last dear interview.

I was roused from this state, which I have but imperfectly described, by the noise of the galloping of horses, the firing of musketry, and the other clamours occasioned by the riding of *the broose*; a body of about twenty horsemen, of the wedding party, who were now at full gallop towards Lillybrae, to bring home the bride, and the women assembled with her, to the house of her husband. I started up, and soon perceived the company arrive at the door of the farmhouse, headed by Davie Cunningham (the stripling who had told the tragic tales at the booking, and to whose lot, it seems, the stocking fell on the night of the feet washing); who, on a light, handsome mare, had “won the broose,” and, consequently, a right to divide among the company, at the door, the customary libations, and to dance the first dance with the bride at night.

The *broose*, as it is called, is generally undertaken by a few of the marriage party, who have the best horses, or are most regardless of their necks, in going home with the bride; and sometimes the trial of horsemanship takes place both in

going and returning. On the present occasion it was attempted only in going for the bride; and while the men plentifully regaled themselves with malt liquors, many took up their partners, and set them on *pads* behind them, on their heavy country horses, but the bride was placed on a pillion by herself, and thus prepared to leave her father's house. I could not bear to be observed, and walked about a mile forward, at a little distance aside from the party's road.

I was resting on an elevated spot, where in former years Mary and I had often sat, arm locked in arm, and admired the goodly prospect beneath us, and counted the small vessels which sailed past in the distant firth, when the renewed firing of fowling pieces, and the shouts of the gathered villagers announced the returning approach of the cavalcade, in which the bride appeared conspicuous, dressed in plain white, and mounted on a handsome black pony. I involuntarily drew near to see the party pass, and was duly saluted, as I stood, by the men; but when the bride came up, I, by some unaccountable impulse, pulled off my

hat, as if instinctively acknowledging the supremacy of love over the adventitious distinctions of birth, or as acting one of those inexplicable or absurd parts, which a man will sometimes be found to perform, who is under the paramount influence of feeling. My little Mary Ogilvie, now a blooming woman, sat gracefully, like a queen, among the troop of rustic, brown complexioned farmers; and, as she passed, cast a single meaning and melancholy glance towards me, while I stood uncovered, straining my eyes in a despairing stare after her.

From this ridiculous posture, I was again roused by a familiar clap, or rather stroke, on my shoulder, laid on with the heavy hand of the Session Clerk; who, having in my boyhood been my occasional preceptor, made no apology for this liberty, but after laughing knowingly at my start, exclaimed—

“Hoot, Maister George, my gentleman, dinna forget yoursel’, and stand there glowering like a wild-cat after the bride. Ye’ll excuse my freedom; but dinna ye mind what the minister’s text was last Sabbath; to wit, ‘Thou shalt not covet thy

neighbour's wife?" Tut, man! there's as gude fish in the sea yet, as ever was brought up by hiuk, or net, or sawmon leister; an' giff ye hae patience a wee, ye'll get a leddy o' your ain, may be as bonnie as Mary Ogilvie hersel', an' a heap o' siller wi' her, man. Ay, Maister George," with another slap on the back, "a wife an' *siller*!"

This officious memento was one of those, by which a man is, sometimes rudely enough, reminded, that the world reasons on general views of interest and expediency, and pays little regard to the present feelings and private wishes of that large number of persons, who still love to indulge, unconfessed to others, a little pleasing romance, in hope, or in recollection, mixed up with the insipid realities of life. I entered, however, into some discourse with my unbidden counsellor, who accompanied me almost home; and I soon after mounted my horse, and proceeded to the farm of Craiglands, to witness the very marriage ceremony of my interesting Mary Ogilvie.

When I entered the house, I found the ceremony just about to take place, and that I had been im-

patiently looked for; for the young farmers were anxious to get to the wedding dinner and the mirth; and the women, who bustled about, were apprehensive that the pies and the pasties would get out of season. The minister was already seated in the chief apartment, the company sitting in pairs round, and was telling his joke to the most forward of those present, and enjoying that consequence and deference which appertains to a country clergyman among his ordinary parishioners. The women did not seem to me now to look so interesting as they had done on the night of the booking; there seemed over them a stiffness and ceremony from dress and emulation, which interfered with the general unaffectedness of their character, and went far to destroy that charm which is ever over pure nature and genuine rural feeling.

A Scotch marriage has been described by much abler pens than I can boast; let me, therefore, be brief. The clergyman, a reverend old man, sat beside Mary's father; and after a short silence, commanded by himself, altering his jocular tone,

and looking steadfastly in the faces of the bride and bridegroom, he gave an extemporaneous explanation of the duties implied in the solemn and irrevocable engagement which the party he addressed were about undertaking, with brief and pithy expression, mixed effectively with the dignified and heart-reaching language of Scripture. When he had ended his address, he rose, and stretching out his arms, as a signal to the company, the whole stood up, and made a circle round the room, the bridegroom and bride in the centre. In this situation he uttered a short prayer for the youthful couple, with the penetrating voice, and much in the strong denunciatory language of the old covenanters.

Mary Ogilvie's colour went and came; but she never once looked towards me. When she and the bridegroom were desired to join hands, she trembled evidently; and when the usual question was addressed to her, if she was willing to take the man whom she held by the hand to be her lawful husband, until death should separate them, in attempting to answer, yes, her tongue seemed

parched, and her breath had become short ; and in making a second attempt to speak audibly, there appeared an earnest striving to articulate, and an expression of agony on her countenance, like that of a criminal uttering, with choking difficulty, the word which is to seal his own doom for ever.

My feelings were wrought to distraction by the interpretation I could not but put upon this extreme agitation. When the minister said, “ I declare you married persons,” she seemed to recover for a moment, and smiled strangely ; but on her father’s approaching her to congratulate her on what was just finished, she threw herself into his arms, and, bursting out into a torrent of weeping, sobbed as if the heart would have burst from her bosom.

The whole company were thrown into consternation by this strange and unexpected occurrence ; and while the bridegroom and all present seemed confused between their own feelings and anxiety for the amiable bride, their superstitious apprehensions were much increased by the low dismal howl, with which the silence was, at this moment,

broken, being set up, on the instant, by the aged watch-dog behind the house, one of those unaccountable noises made by the dumb animals, which, in many parts of Scotland, is considered a sure forerunner of death, or some other calamity.

On hearing this, the whole present seemed enchained in amazement and foreboding terror! Some shook their heads; and, in ominous looks and whispers, presaged some disastrous event to the newly married pair. In the bridegroom's countenance, disappointment and fear striving against manliness and hope, made him a very picture of mental conflict; and as for myself, my mind was now excited to a sort of stoical apathy, as if it was moved to that pitch, beyond which it refused to be carried.

After a few moments more of confusion, the pale and lovely bride was assisted out of the room, apparently nearly insensible; and I saw her not until I found her seated at the dinner table, to which we were called, after a brief period spent in the confused murmurs of moralizing foreboding. I entered among the first, and observed her in her

appointed seat in pensive silence; and when the company came gradually into the room, she rose up with a melancholy smile, and an unconscious dignity, of which, till now, I had thought a farmer's daughter utterly incapable. When she observed me, she curtsied with a look of pleasure, as if she had said, "Now it is over, and I am happy." I was placed near to her, and opposite to her father, congratulating myself on my present composure, and rejoicing to observe the return of hers, when the old man was called upon to pray for a blessing upon the repast.

This is an observance never omitted in Scotland upon occasions of importance, and is a solemn mode of expressing, and interweaving with it, those religious sentiments with which every public event in life is sanctified and associated. An address to the Deity never fails to arouse the habitually religious feelings common in the country here; but, on the present occasion, after what had taken place, the state of mind of the bride, the foreboding thoughts, mixed with vague imaginings of sudden death, in fearful and calamitous forms, and

the phantoms of superstition which cast a gloom over all present, together with the general reverence with which the patriarchal vehicle of prayer was regarded, made his present communication with heaven be participated in by this company with breathless silence and something like enthusiastic solemnity.

He stood up, and the company rose with him. There was perfect silence for a little. He began his prayer; and in a tone low, but intensely earnest, besought the immediate presence of "Him who is, from everlasting to everlasting God! the author of all existence, and the searcher of all hearts." By degrees his tone became high and sonorous, as he brought before our minds the grand or fearful images of an invisible world. His gray hair seemed to move on his bald temples, with the parental fervour of his feelings; and his countenance was worked into an expression of sublimity, as, with his hands clasped together, and his eyes turned upwards, his strong language seemed to pierce, as he expressed it, through the very joints and marrow, of whatever lies at the

bottom of our deepest apprehensions of truth and consciousness of connexion with Deity. The *unction* with which he gave forth the affecting language of the Apostles and Prophets, aroused all my early associations of religious sentiment which had long lain dormant in my heart as I wandered in foreign parts. My flesh crept from the effect of the sepulchral tone and fervent awfulness with which he brought together time and eternity, the connections formed by mortals on this footstool, and their dissolution in the grave. But when I gazed on his face, as he prayed, that the marriage now solemnized on earth, might be ratified in heaven; and that the pair present, who had now been joined together, in time, might, after the brief separation of death, be again united in eternity, when earthly connections had passed away, no more to be severed from each other; and might with saints and ministering spirits join the everlasting anthem in the mansions of the just, when time should be no more:—my mind was carried forward to a separation from Mary Ogilvie, so perfect, so hopeless, so eternal, even beyond time and

the grave, that my feelings, which had lately been screwed to the tightest pitch, would be controlled no longer; and in the midst of the high-wrought solemnity of the prayer, I also burst into a convulsion of involuntary tears; and covering my face with my hands, was obliged to give way to the torrent, and sobbed aloud in excessive and bursting agitation!

This second manifestation of mental distress, occurring in a moment of high religious excitement, threw the whole present again into much consternation. I rushed hastily out of the room; and my feelings were now so thoroughly awakened, that I continued for a long time in a state of mind such as to prevent me from again offering to appear among the company. I still suffered so much in endeavouring to smother my passion, that I believed myself an enemy to my own happiness; and was but partially soothed by the thought, that I had made passion give way to reason; for I tried in vain to flatter myself as having acted with firmness, in giving up to the arms of another, the woman, whose image was interwoven with my ex-

istence, and whom my obstinacy had consigned, perhaps, to as much suffering as I endured.

I sat in an upper room alone, enjoying a sort of bitter satisfaction, in the opportunity of indulging sad and desponding reflections, on the die being irrevocably cast, against my dearest feelings: my head resting on both my hands on the table, and my eyes covered with my handkerchief, when I thought I heard a foot trip across the room, and presently felt a slight tap on my shoulder; when looking up, I beheld Mary Ogilvie herself stooping thoughtfully over me.

“George!” she said anxiously; “why do you sit there by yourself, and the company below talking of you, and wondering at your absence, and your strange conduct?” I looked up in her face, but answered not. “My father,” she went on, “has persuaded me to go to you myself, and to beg of you to rouse yourself, and come down among the folks below.—*Do* come, Mr. George!”

I still continued to look at her in silence. We gazed for a few moments in each other's faces, with strange meaning: she took my hand, evi-

dently alarmed by my steadfast look ; and, with the same beseeching expression in her countenance which she had had in the little wood, continued—

“George,” she said, “come down among the company, and countenance my wedding! an’ dinna affront me to the people: an’ dinna detain me here with you, for you know it is not right. Will you not speak to me, Mr. George?”

I only sighed deeply, for my tongue was somehow paralysed. “We were happy many a day nae doubt, when we were almost bairns!” She went on: “but as for our being man and wife, I see, Mr. George, it was never ordained to be. Ah! collect yourself!” she added, bending over me, “and resign yoursel’ to the will of Providence! and dinna allow yoursel’ to vex the feelings, or disturb the outward bearing o’ your—— your hapless and sair-hearted Mary Ogilvie!” Her lip quivered as she spoke to me, and a few tears trickled down her cheeks; but she turned away her head, as chiding herself for giving way to these endearing, but now improper expressions;

and, as I still gazed in her countenance, which beamed with soft sentiments, as I perceived her bosom again heave with emotion, and pressed her warm hand within mine, I would have given worlds to have recalled a few hours, before she was lost to me for ever.

I promised to do her bidding, and she left me. I then rose, and taking a few turns across the room, to collect my energies, I next descended, to join as I could, the festivities of the wedding. I considered that, as the die was now cast by my own adherence to my purpose, I should not allow feelings, which I might hereafter, perhaps, be disposed to treat with ridicule, to make me miserable, and incapacitate me from the pursuits belonging to my station in society; but that it became me now to follow steadily the path of fortune, which I had chosen; and I half agreed to Mary's popular philosophy, that, though we had, as children, been happy and inseparable, it was never ordained by Providence that we should be united in after years.

When I rejoined the wedding people, the dinner

was long over ; liquor went plentifully round, and good humour and laughter had resumed their reign. The musicians of the village were already in attendance ; and beginning to draw their screeching bows in the next apartment, reminded all who had swallowed sufficient of the exciting potations, to incline them to dance, that it was suitable and seasonable for them now to begin to leap to their merry ministrations. Soon, agreeable to the clamorous desires of the majority, the large room adjoining was cleared, tables and drinkers were set into corners, an elevated seat was adjusted for the fiddlers, and the lads and lasses began to enjoy their characteristic and favourite amusement of agile dancing.

The lively movement of the Scotch reel, with the occasional variation of a simple country dance, formed the grand entertainment of the evening. The elder portion of the company sat beside the bowl, admiring the happiness and agility of the young people ; and, as the night wore late, and the liquor got into their heads, they fell to arguing together upon religion, the never failing

resource, and general *finalé* of a Scotch *conversazione*.

What between the hearty happiness which I witnessed, particularly among the dancers, the liberal drinking, the occasional rustic song from the younger folks, and the orthodox arguments of the elder men, my mind could not refuse considerable amusement from the medley scene; but I saw little of the bride during the whole of the evening, until the last scene of all, which I have yet the pain to describe.

A Scotch wedding is never considered by the guests as over until *the bedding* of the married pair; that is, the nearest friends generally remain until the young couple have retired, and must then see them in bed together, a custom probably founded upon the peculiarity of the Scotch law, which makes acknowledgment of each other in such a situation, alone legal marriage. To avoid this unpleasant and indelicate custom, Mary and her husband had taken the opportunity of the deep engagement of the dancers and arguers, to retire, under lock and key, into their own apartment; leaving to some of the elder people to prevent any

thing of the kind, and dismiss the remains of the company.

The moment, however, that this was suspected, the whole of the younger people collected before their departure, and insisted on forcing their way into the chamber, and on witnessing the bedding, according to established use, and wont. I know not what infatuation detained me in the house until the last; but I had thought that at least no further trial of my feelings was reserved for me. In this, however, I was mistaken; for in the zealous muster of all that remained, I was roughly laid hold of by some one with the freedom inspired by liquor, and soon hurried, with the crowd, into the very chamber where lay my Mary in bed with her husband.

I had not power to retreat, but stood behind the others, to witness this finishing scene. Some of the elder relatives of Mary's husband now produced a large bottle of brandy and the bride cake; and, as the company stood round the room, all drank the healths of the newly married pair, with wishes for a numerous offspring, expressed in no very studied language.

The contending emotions of bitter self-condemnation were again beginning to agitate me, from what I witnessed, and from the very anticipation of having to submit to the simple ceremony of wishing health and happiness to attend this union, when I was saved the pain by another, and most unlooked for circumstance. The young men and women, being now dressed for their departure, stood round in pairs, as on the night of the booking; and such as were little in view began to whisper and fondle, as on that occasion; when some one's lass, pointing to the late hour, indicated on the dial of an old-fashioned case clock, that stood near the centre of the room, expressed much anxiety to get home; upon which her partner, watching his opportunity, stepped forward, and moved back the index an hour, by way of excuse for prolonging their stay. Whether, in doing this, he had loosened the clock, which seemed to have been badly fixed, I know not; but just as an elderly man, with a glass in his hand, had, in a solemn, but, as I thought, doubting manner, wished health to the bride and her husband, and

that they might live a long life of conjugal endearment, the clock, beginning to strike the hour, seemed to move, being agitated by its own machinery, until swaying forward its tall length, it fell on its face in the open space in the centre of the room, like Dagon, the god of Ashtaroth, before the Ark of the Israelites, and was dashed into twenty pieces on the floor !

Mary and her husband started, and sitting up in bed, looked forth on the destruction in nervous amazement : and the first words that were spoken while all stood round were by a solemn little elderly man, who, as the clock rattled on the floor, with a wild smile exclaimed, “ There is an end of Time ! ”

This concluding incident of the falling and destruction of a favourite clock, which had stood in this one spot from time immemorial, to have taken place on the owner’s marriage night, as a conclusion to the other remarkable occurrences, was regarded by every one present as crowning all the alarming apprehensions which they had hitherto entertained, and they seemed individually impressed with feelings which no one dared to ex-

press to his neighbour. In the midst also of the pause, wherein nothing appeared but superstitious looks and the shaking of heads, the watch dog below was again heard setting up his low and doleful howl, which echoed in the silence of night, and seemed to paralyze the whole with dread, so that the men at once seemed to become sober, and the women cowered and clung to their partners, anxiously wishing to get off out of the house, lest a worse thing should befall.

Astonishment, partaking of superstition, and a strange paralyzing excitement again began to render me unconscious almost of what was going forward, when, before I was aware, I found the company gone, and myself standing alone in the centre of the room, staring down upon the broken clock, when lifting up my head, 'my eyes were met full by those of Mary Ogilvie, who was steadily gazing upon me, with one of those unconscious searching looks, which seemed to speak a thousand things to me, which could not be uttered.

This never to be forgotten glance was the last which I obtained, or which perhaps I could have

borne from Mary on this trying day,—its unutterable expression is almost too much for me, even now, to think of. I instantly rushed down stairs, mounted my horse, I know not how, rode home, dark as it was, as if I would have broken my neck ; for I know not whether my own mind, or the minds of those whom I left behind, were in a state of the greatest confusion.

CHAPTER IV.

TIME, they say, flies quickly on, and summers and winters flit rapidly away into the oblivion of the past. Nothing, however, can be more bitterly false, in many of the circumstances of life, and so I found it. Certainly I did many things as the world do them, when I returned to it, and was successful—successful even in my ambition as to a marriage connection; but somehow I rejoiced not, even when my wish was accomplished. Why should I detail the common scrambles of worldly advancement, or the insipid process of a common courtship? The latter is even more thoroughly wretched and uninteresting.—A set speech and a studied look, a bow, a simper, consultations of bargaining parents and suspicious lawyers, an ugly association of parchment deeds, seals, witnesses, and red tape.

“This is my wedding day!” said I to myself, at length, and quoting sarcastically the words of the old fool in the play, one morning, as I pulled on my gloves, and surveyed myself in the mirror, on the day of my own marriage. I was almost ashamed of my calm composure, and that I should feel quite as usual on so important an occasion; that I was not flurried and impatient on my wedding day like other people; while, at the same time, the servants were in a state, as if it were *they* that were to be married, and not myself, they were all in such a panic of hurry and disorder.

When I came down stairs all the domestics, as if they had been watching for me, came round me for orders, concerning twenty things that had been suggested among them, and that each, in the thought of his individual importance, considered as a serious matter, of which *he* should have charge on this great day. They all marvelled at the paucity of my orders, and the coolness of my manner, and seemed much disappointed that I had not some hurrying business, or some great charge to assign to each on this uncommon morn-

ing. "A pox take the fools!" said I, in the spirit of quotation, and recollecting the testy exclamation of Swift to the rabble who followed him in the streets of Dublin. "Why should they not allow me to go quietly, and *be married*, as I intended!" But I recollected that it became a man of the fortune which I now possessed, and the consequence of which I now was, to spread forth my wants and my wishes over a large surface, and to do every thing in that stately and magnificent way, that would be making an exhibition of myself, and all that I owned, to please others, who look for such entertainment from men of wealth, and that all this was only a necessary effect of my greatness.

I had forgotten something, however, and reascended to my room; I walked several times backwards and forwards, for something worked in my mind,—thoughts intruded that came from far, and from distant time, quite unsuitable for a wedding day.

Why, said I, at length, impatiently, should I be thus incessantly pondering and thinking? My

mind's activity is a torture to me ! Why cannot I marry and beget children as other people do, without thinking about the matter ? Still I mused, and one image flitted across my mind after another ; —among others, that of my destined bride, who was, doubtless, at this moment adorning herself to receive me. She is “ a fine woman,” thought I, that is undoubted, and brings me a large fortune and high connections. I am envied by all who know us ; and yet, somehow, I am not the least overjoyed about it. She has preferred me to much greater personages, and loves me too, she says ; and really I do admire her very much—but—

I took off my hat as I mused, and accidentally looking into the mirror, as I passed, observed something which changed the whole current of my thoughts, and quite disturbed my composure. It was merely the lock of hair on my temples, which appeared to-day, as I thought, more curled and as it was of old than usual ; and I called to remembrance that into this temple lock, Mary Ogilvie used to twist her fingers when she was a girl ; and when she grew nearer to womanhood, she had

often, as we sat, pulled it out and spread it with her soft fingers about my face, and admired it,—and then she would look into my eyes and smile lovingly, until she blushed and turned away her head—and then, as I drew her towards me, she scarcely refused the kiss into which she had seduced me.

As “busy meddling memory” conjured up these things one by one, and many more, I became fixed to the spot like a statue, until their array drew from me a sigh so deep that it almost choked me, and convulsed my frame to the very extremities. I had flattered myself before this that I had done with such things, and wondered at the depth of nature’s workings. Was there any one else existing like me? I never remembered to have heard from any other a sigh so deep, except once from a widowed friend, when his infant daughter looked playfully up in his face, and by some artless question reminded him of his spouse that was gone; his merry countenance became quite distorted, while he drew a sigh which shook beneath him the very chair on which he was sitting. Good

God, thought I, how valuable is that thing which we call feeling, to the few that possess it! Yet what a price do they pay for it! How it breaks in upon their tranquillity, and makes fools of them in the eye of the rest of the world!

A carriage drew up in front of my house, and thundering knocks at the door commanded me to be "myself again." Two relatives, in full dress, were ushered in, who came to fetch me to meet my bride; and as I descended and passed through the hall, the mustered servants peeped from every corner to look at me, as if I ought to have been different on this day from what I was on the preceding one, or on that which was to follow. As the carriage with my cockaded servants rattled along St. George's Street, I said within myself, well, I have sacrificed much for fortune and that species of greatness—verily I have my reward, and I shall make the most of it; and I determined from henceforth to carry myself with all possible dignity, to "follow after" the favour of great men, and to measure to the utmost of my power the

real value of the happiness that mere riches, and so forth, would bring to a mind like mine.

I found my bride waiting for me surrounded by her ladies, and dressed sumptuously. She looked like a queen, and smiled upon me—like Queen Elizabeth, I suppose—for the expression of her eye was, as I fancied, as cold as marble, and barren of sentiment, save the empty glow of vanity, from finding herself to-day the personage of greatest importance in an elegant circle; and she seemed to regard me with complacency as the man who was to be the supporter of her dignity, and a being necessary to show her forth honourably to the world. I was afterwards praised by her for the dignity with which I demeaned myself on this day, for at the ceremony I certainly looked as coldly great as the highest authority on fashionable manners could have dictated. Indeed I scarcely heard the few words of the fashionable clergyman, who minced the matter to us in a most gentlemanly way; and was not so unpolite as to trouble us with any thing in word or manner which might cause

us to think the engagement we were entering into of any importance after the deeds were signed, or even to remember the *ceremony*.

We drove off, accompanied by many attendants, to my new seat of Alderhall, where we sat down, as the newspapers say, to a sumptuous dinner. But how strange our associations—the simpering clergyman and his petite “grace before meat,” and his kid gloves, and his white hands, as he spread them forth gracefully to say his say—and the gold rings on his soft fingers, only sent back my thoughts to the bald head and awful address to the Almighty of the aged farmer, at Mary Ogilvie’s wedding dinner. Recollections, thoughts, which never were entirely absent, crowded upon me again in spite of every effort, I became lost for a moment in distracting fancies and melancholy regrets—but the sudden *amen* of the polite churchman recalled me to the outward acting of the part that became me.

Our party was brilliant and select, but mostly of my bride’s inviting; and it did not become me to object to lords and men in power, who increased

my dignity, and might materially forward my ambitious views. Among this party I certainly upheld myself with considerable state; and my very silence, when I was involuntarily thinking of very different and inferior personages, inspired my guests with becoming respect, and greatly pleased my bride.

Thus I spent my own splendid wedding night, among a party with which I had little in common, acting my part, as is often done in similar circumstances, to every one's satisfaction but my own. At length the company departed, and the joyful moment was now at hand when I was to "ascend the bridal couch." I was fatigued in spirits, sick of my visitors, and drowsy from the lateness of the hour, the effects of feasting, and of the evening's libations, of which I had unconsciously taken an unusual share.

I was ushered ceremoniously to our chamber, and began to undress, without remarking any change of circumstances, and that my bride was already in bed. "Well," said I internally, and

yawning, "Thank God, it is all over now !" But I cast my eyes carelessly round, and found I was in a strange and magnificent bedchamber, and—

Why should I talk farther about commonplace events? It is with feelings I have to do, and feelings make us all egotistical. Time passed on, and I was now a gentleman of large fortune and larger expectations, but I was unhappy.

I was sitting one morning in my dressing gown, in my drawing room, in Queen Street, Edinburgh, drumming idly on the glass of the window with my fingers, musing disconsolately, as I looked over to the Firth of Forth, and on the green banks of the Fife shore, and reasoning with myself why I should be discontented. I had early in life, and easily, obtained fortune and connexions, which caused me to be honoured and envied in the best circles, in the assemblies of which my wife and I shone with considerable lustre. In short, I had nothing to do but to follow pleasure, and in my house were often entertained large parties of gay and fashionable society.

But my wife had found of late, with concern,

that I had fallen off greatly in my dignified deportment, and therefore annoyed and even scorned me. I sometimes, as she thought, kept too great a distance from those with whom it was an honour for us to be acquainted ; and then I had an absent manner, and often made too free with persons who were, in comparison, *nobody*. I was enthusiastically fond of music ; and she taxed me with often seeming to forget that she was present, and even my own consequence, while I smiled with pretty misses, who could play with taste, or sing for me a touching song.

But, in truth, I was tired of splendid parties, and confusion, and compliments, and parade, and many other things in which the heart has neither part nor lot, and wished ardently for a little of life in my own way, and some society to my own taste. My wife sat, a pretty bust, above the level of my table, and often repeated to company the fine things which she had said languidly to myself before marriage, and which I then believed to indicate some heart—some of the qualities I wished the woman to possess who should be my wife ; but

she was without heart, or sentiment, or softness, and one look of Mary Ogilvie's eyes spoke more, a thousand times, than all she ever uttered. I now dared not company with a few friends whom I really loved, for if I did, I was certain thereby to distress my lady, and disturb the peace of my own home; and, in short, I felt as the Jewish King did, "like a sparrow alone upon the house top;" for, though I had builded me houses, and planted me vineyards, though I had men servants and women servants, I was, after all, without a companion whom it interested me to please, and on whom my affections might rest. I had no one like-minded, who might rejoice with me when I rejoiced, and weep with me when sadness came over my spirit.

My thoughts now, as on every similar occasion, recurred, in spite of myself, to my early love, and again dwelt upon her whose form and attractions still mingled with every thought and feeling which gave any interest to my existence. This was the real secret of my obvious disquietude, and hidden wretchedness; and, in spite of every resolution, in spite of all that philosophy taught, and all that

worldly prudence dictated, my passion seemed to acquire strength from its very hopelessness.

It was this that lay at the root of those singular musings that haunted me in private and in public, "in the field and by the way," and constantly sent my fancy, for ideas of real delight, to times of youth, and seems now remembered only as a pleasing dream. The earliest years of my life, the pure dawn of my feelings, the first shooting of my young ideas, the enthusiastic expansion of my intellects, were all associated with the smiles, and innocent looks, and glowing sentiments of Mary Ogilvie; our communion together had been like the communion of saints ere Paradise was polluted by iniquity; the glances of young imagination that often beamed upon her transparent countenance, the sensibility that spoke in her lucid eye, so warm that it burned the heart in which it dwelt, yet so deep, and appearing so mild, that none could *know it*, but he who was the blessed object of it, and who participated in it;—that sensibility, those looks, yet struck upon the most delicate and the tenderest strings of my heart, calling up,

indeed, those precious “ thoughts that lie too deep for tears,” and drawing out those sighs that breathe feelings inexpressible and somewhat unearthly.

While I still sat at the window, and in the midst of this reverie, a mood of the mind which is often designated as mere weakness by those who know not its unchangeable foundation, and its real pains and pleasures, but which, at any rate, I indulged, as a maiden does her tears, in private; my servant entered the apartment, and intimated that a man, having the appearance of a farmer, and dressed in black, was below, and begged to see me. I started at the intimation, and requested that the person might be shown up to where I then was. The servant left the drawing-room, but immediately returned, and with a smile said, that the man declined entering the house, and especially going up stairs, for he said, that “ the rooms are too grand for him to go into them dressed as he is, and he hopes your honour will just speak to him in the passage.”

I rose from my seat, and on going down stairs, observed Mary Ogilvie’s father standing in the

hall, uncovered, his gray hair and pale reverend face contrasting strongly with the fresh mourning which he wore. He seemed to observe me with earnest attention, as I descended in my morning dress; and, as I drew near, bent his stiff body in a profound reverence to me. I held out my hand, and grasping his, shook it cordially: the old man said nothing, but his eye glistened with the pleasure he seemed to feel at this reception. I opened the door of my library, into which he, after some hesitation, and looking down to his antique top boots, consented to accompany me.

I was alarmed by the indication of his apparel, and asked him, hastily, if he had lost any relatives, and if his daughter was well?

“My daughter is in good health,” he answered, with country solemnity; “but there hae changes happened in your former neighbourhood, Mr. George, changes which only the all-seeing eye of Providence could penetrate, for we little expected them; and I hae no errand to you, Sir, wherewith to disturb you; but I just thought that if ye be not greatly changed yoursel’, by the mammon of this

world's prosperity, you might like to hear the news frae Lillybrae; for surely," he went on, shaking his gray locks, "ye hae not forgotten the days that are gone, and the green fields where ye used to wander, an' the warm hearts o' them that used to pet you and tell you auld tales, when ye were a sedate thoughtfu' boy, and wha often, Sir, speak o' you still, and long to hear of your temporal and spiritual welfare."

I was moved almost to tears in the mood in which I was, by this unaffected expression of true regard from the good old man, such a thing had now become so new to me; but before I could reply, he went on to say, in his own simple manner:—

"You see, Sir, I just couldna leave this grand ceety, where I hae wandered up an' down till I'm like to fa' wi' fatigue, without knocking at the knocker o' your great house, now since ye hae gotten sic wealth, and are become like Joseph in the house o' King Pharaoh, and asking to get to see you, that I might bring you tidings o' what has happened in the country of your fathers."

“ Mr. Ogilvie,” I said, impatiently, “ I am most heartily glad to see you, and greatly obliged by your visit; but tell me, I pray you, at once, who is dead, and what changes have taken place?”

“ I am just about to tell you, Sir,” he went on, solemnly; “ but do not be impatient, or murmur when ye hear of changes, for this is a changeable world; and it was not for naething that the dumb dog yowl’d sae eerily, and the auld clock fell on its face and brak to pieces on the night that my Mary was married; and that ye yoursel’ bursted out into sobbing, when we were in solemn exercise, pouring out our hearts to the Lord for a blessing on the union. But ye’ll hae forgotten all that, Mr. George, nae doubt.”

“ No, no!” I exclaimed, eagerly, “ nor shall I ever forget it; but I pray you again, Mr. Ogilvie, to tell me, quickly, what has taken place?”

“ Sir,” he answered, “ be patient, and I’ll tell you the whole tale. I was weel pleased at the time wi’ Mary’s marriage; for Craiglands was a man of worth, and was in good circumstances; but the strange occurrences of the wedding night,

seemed to have settled down in his mind : he did not seem perfectly satisfied ; and though he said nothing to Mary, and she did every thing to make him happy, yet he had taken it deeply into his thoughts, that *he* was not the man that she loved in her heart ; and from the awful warnings o' the wedding day, and also some words that his father had said to him when on his death bed, he was persuaded within himself, that some fatal event was soon to separate them. In this state of mind, whenever he went from hame, or when any danger was in his way, he pondered on the warnings o' his wedding night, and literally lived as though every day might be his last.

“ Mary soothed his mind ; and had reasoned him almost entirely out of his apprehensions. He had begun to forget his fears, and was sitting at home one night with Mary, conversing in family comfort, when a man from this ceety of Embro' rode up to the farm door, on a sair wearied horse, and delivered a letter. The letter was frae some lawyer o' the ceety, anent some affairs o' his late father's, and summoned him peremptorily to set

forth, and to appear in Embro' the very next day. The apprehensions of the thoughtful young man came again upon him on this, and he passed a sleepless night, striving against his fears and his forebodings.

“ He rose early on the following morning, and Mary strove to cheer his spirit. He had a fine spirited horse, which stood saddled at the door as he was ready to go. He went to the door, and looked round him wi' a sort of confused look, as if he was thinking that this might be the last day he was to look upon the sun, and the fair meadows of Craiglands, and the distant haughs of bonnie Lillybrae.

“ He returned and stalked about strangely, as if seeking something ; he went ben to the spence, and took a gazing look of his father's portrait ; he came back again, and stood looking at Mary. She had her own fears, but concealed them ; and exhorted him to go on his way in the name o' the Lord, without fear ; and that He would be the protector of him, and of her, until his safe return ! The young man parted from Mary with strong

feeling, unable to free himself of the notion that he might never see her more ! He mounted his beast, and as he rode off, my daughter, who stood looking after him, saw him put his napkin to his eyes : but when he came to the brow of the hill, where the road descended, he stopped for a little, and looked back, like Lot's wife : then turning slowly round, he put spurs to his horse and immediately disappeared.

“ Young Craiglands spurred on with good heart, for nearly twenty miles ; in the course of which he fell in with another traveller,—a talking man ; whom I have since seen, whose company and crack helped to beguile the wearisomeness o' the way. The strange man took farewell o' my son-in-law at a cross road, which obliged him to proceed by himsel' down a long wild tract, through what was once a wood, but what was now only a desolate stunted strath ; full of boggy deeps, and patches of black heather ; besides heights an' hollows, where man or beast seldom tried to penetrate. It is a long desolate road ; there is but a single cot-house to be seen in five miles' ride.

I never passed along it but once : and oh ! it was lonesome and dreigh ! and here, no doubt, the solitary man had his own dowie an' sad thoughts as he travelled through this wilderness, where the very mew o' the piesweep* would make you wae ; and the whir o' the mountain-hen ower your head, would make you fear'd.

“ Another road to Embro' led out o' this dismal waste, when ye come to a wee brook, that blusters below and beside you, among grey rocks and bushes ; but the near side is steep, just as ye enter by a little gate, to a path that leads by the nearest cut to the great road ; and this gate is sometimes slightly closed, or but half open. As Craiglands was entering here, the half open gate swung by accident a little forward, and the horse struck against it : while its rider gave it a hasty curb, which further provoked and startled the animal. It first started back, then gave a spring forward, and now the gate swinging back a second time, the horse was struck with violence on the breast. The spirited animal now reared up, and

* Curlew.

then sprang aside, in the direction of the brook, which brawled below, and in another instant, in spite of every effort of its unhappy rider, it plunged down the precipice into the rocky channel of the stream !

“ In the sudden descent, Craiglands was unhorsed, and fell by himself, with terrible force ! and, although the depth of the bank was scarce fifteen feet, he was whirled round, and pitched upon his head : and when it struck upon the rock, his neck gave a crack ; for it was clean broken ! and the unfortunate man expired on the instant, without a quiver or a groan.

“ A woodman, who was on the opposite side of the stream, saw the whole accident. It was not three minutes from his coming to the gate before he was in eternity ; the man at once ran forward, and saw my braw son-in-law a stiffening corpse ! while the horse, with but little injury, got up and scrambled out on the sloping side of the brook.”

When the old man came to this part of his story, he was hardly able to articulate. “ Good

heaven!" I could not help exclaiming, "and is Mary's husband already dead?"

"Yes!" said the farmer, wiping his face, "he is now gone to the world of spirits! where we must all shortly appear: but let me tell you the rest o' my tale.

"It wasna until the day after that he was carried hame to his own house. Mary had passed an eerie night, and next day was restless and anxious, yet could scarce tell the reason why. I went daundering over to Craiglands' farm in the morning, as I was wont to do. We spoke of William, who was absent; and ever and anon she said, 'I dinna know what so strangely affects me about my puir gudeman, but I wish all may be right. Some fancy led us to go to the door, although we did not yet expect him hame. We stood unconsciously, looking wishfully in the direction of Edinburgh; when, as we watched, we observed a crowd of people peering above the hill, just where he had stood and looked back on the morning of his departure.

"We gazed at the approaching crowd in fear and

silence. At length Mary, laying her hand on her side, as if to hold down her heart, said, ‘ Father, yonder comes some wae sight, I darena look any longer; run and meet it, an’ bring me the tidings, for I ken it’s grief and sorrow:’ and, when she had spoken this, she flew ben into the farthest corner of the house. I couldna stir for my life; but the crowd soon came up; for there were women and auld men following, wi’ weeping and lamentation; and they brought forward what looked to be a straighted corpse, but I soon found it was my buirdly son-in-law, laid on a board, his feet foremost; and thus he had been carried towards his own house, his horse being led by the bridle behind him.

“ Mary was again out. I heard her skreigh. I followed her back into the spence; and, after a moment of distracted consternation, she took my hand in both hers, and, striving against her thoughts, said, calmly, ‘ Father, this is a sair sight for me to see, but it is not altogether unexpected, for I have had a warning from Providence in my ain private thoughts; but I canna yet see

what is intended for me in this changeable world. But, O, father, remember I'm the weaker vessel; and when ye see me o'erwhelm'd with consternation at the trials of life, that come on us suddenly, like an armed man, stand by me, father, and remember the weakness of a woman !'

“ For three days the whole country round sounded with the tale of this awful visitation. On the fourth the mourners, as they gathered, blackened the green knows of Craiglands ; for great was the company, and they came frae the east and the west ; and the lads that had but lately danced at his bridal, and the auld men that had drunken freely out o' his bicker, now laid my braw son in the cauld yird ; and, as they grat round his grave, they said to ane another, ‘ The judgments o' the Lord have lighted among us, and wha may tell what a day shall bring forth ! ’ ”

The last words of this melancholy narrative the old man was hardly able to utter ; for the tears streamed down his pale face, his voice shook exceedingly, and I was almost as much affected as himself. How could I be otherwise than deeply

affected by the tale? from being myself so much the cause of the disquietude of him who was now thus strangely cut off,—from the exhibition I had made of myself at their marriage, and from the deep interest I felt in every thing that concerned Mary Ogilvie.

The good old man seemed soothed and consoled by the interest I had shown in his grief, and my participation in his feelings. He almost smiled through his tears; and, wiping his eyes, said, “Sir, in coming to call at your splendid mansion, I considered that I was drawing a bow at a venture, and might never get at all to see you, for I ken it’s hard to carry a full cup; I ken that rich men walk in a vain show, and think shame to hae either heart or feelings like poorer men. But I hae proved and tried you frae your youth up. I hae yearned to see how ye would bear prosperity, if it were to be your lot; and great is my pleasure to see that ye’re neither spoiled in your kind heart, nor yet blown up into a bubble of fashion.”

The old man then went on to describe to me how collectedly Mary Ogilvie had acted under the

present afflicting change, and what pleasure it would give her to hear of me and of this interview.

“Tell Mary,” I said, with warmth, as, after drinking a single glass of wine, he rose to go, “that I have not forgotten her, nor the days of our childhood; and that, if she has a friend *on earth*, she has one in me:” and, having said this, I took a ring from my finger, and begged the old man to carry it to her from me, as a memento of our youthful friendship.

I parted from the worthy farmer as from a father. The smile of gratitude and pleasure, now on his sorrowful countenance, was like the sun shining after rain; and, as he receded from my door, with a less tardy step, he looked as if he was, like myself thinking, that the joy and grief of life, in their respective light and dark draperies, frequently seemed to be friendly companions, and chose to journey hand in hand on their way together.

The news I had received was not without its painful consideration; yet the whole was a *morceau* of nature’s furnishing, addressed to the heart,

which served to chase from my mind the *ennui* of sloth and fashionable pleasure; and I was upon the whole relieved and soothed, and furnished with a subject of interesting reflection. The circumstance of Mary Ogilvie's being already a widow, raised thoughts which alternately pleased and tortured me, until the hour arrived which brought my Italian preceptor; and I engaged in study, as a further refreshment to my mind.

I give myself credit for some ingenuity in contriving the plan of engaging a master, and revising my Italian; for by it, I always made certain of a little time to spend in my own way; it formed a plea for avoiding many parties and engagements to me irksome and disagreeable; and by it I snatched many hours of "literary leisure," from the vain race after tasteless pleasure, or which I should have wasted in the society of those who merely regarded me as the representative of my estates and my equipage, but who would not know me for a day, were any circumstance to deprive me of these adventitious advantages: but I could not, by any reasoning or soothing,

escape the anger of my gay lady, who persecuted me constantly for not following her fully through the whirlpool of dissipation and fashion.

I passed the morning at home, until forgetting a promise I had made to my spouse, I went to prepare to go out to dine with a friend. I was just ascending the stairs to dress, when I was followed by the servant with a *note* from my haughty lady, reminding me of my engagement to her, to accompany her to an evening party and ball, at the house of a Lady Chetwynd, who had lately started in the race of fashion, and was running her career as fast as she could get the good people of Edinburgh to run with her. I was forced to disappoint my own friend, and submitted to my wife's wishes with the best possible grace, knowing what, after all, I owed to her, as well as to my present place in society. We therefore went in the evening, and took our places among the brilliant assembly.

I was pleased with, I even enjoyed the ball much, for a time, for I ever loved to observe the young beauties in the early part of an evening of

this kind, while as yet all was impatient expectation, as they stepped across the rooms, on their entrance, with the light yet firm tread of buoyant youth and flowing spirits—and as they afterwards gracefully exhibited their elegant forms in the airy mazes of the dance. It was grateful to my spirit to observe the pleasure that sparkled in their eyes, as they kept time to the light French and Venetian music; for the sounds of banqueting and gay revelry, with the splendour of dress and of beauty in the hours of festivity, strike pleasingly upon the warm fancy of youth, and often draw up the feelings to rapturous sensations.

But, unhappily, the rich and gay often hunt down pleasure, until they exhaust themselves in the pursuit; gorge themselves with it until it becomes nauseous; drain the varied cup to the very bottom, and finding the dregs becoming bitter, or loathsome, they then will exclaim, with the sated voluptuary, “vanity of vanities—all is vanity!”

But if I sometimes suffered myself to receive pleasure in scenes like these, still the tenor of my life was, notwithstanding all my splendour, but weariness and woe. Let no man say that my private

misery, my incurable discontent, was irrational and blamable, unless they can show how the secret cravings of the affections can be satisfied with husks, or how the swelling current of nature can be choked up or changed in its course. What sadness and regret often embittered my thoughts, as I dwelt on former times, and contrasted what I suffered with what I might have enjoyed ! How these regrets preyed upon my heart, as I lay in my lone and sleepless bed, while my lady revelled away the hours of sleep abroad without me ! What hopeless thoughts, and joyless nights of weary reflection, what tossings to and fro, until the dawning of the day !

I was awakened one night, or rather morning, by a loud knocking at the door of my room ; we then lived in Brunswick Square, London ; and my servant's voice, crying, " Master, master, for God's sake get up, and come down stairs instantly ! "

" What is the matter, John ? " I asked, starting from my dream."

" It is my mistress," he answered, " brought home almost dead."

I hurried on some part of my dress, and, on descending, found my lady insensible, attended by a surgeon, whose only reply to my eager inquiries was, that, "as to her danger, it could not at present be properly ascertained ; but that a few hours would, probably, decide her fate."

After a few hours spent in painful watching over her, and anxious suspense, during which time she was out of one swoon and into another, in the morning an unfortunate event, arising out of her then condition, and which the surgeon feared, took place ; she fevered immediately, and, as the day advanced, all hopes of her recovery were abandoned.

Had I been, by this distressing occurrence, forcibly torn from the vortex of fashionable pleasure, with all its selfish sensitiveness, and all its effeminacy, and forced, by ordinary decency, to confine myself as an unwilling attendant upon a sick bed, my state would have been truly pitiable. But to me, attendance in the sick chamber of a wife, had her case been hopeful, was comparatively a pleasure. My habits of thinking and acting were

such, that I was seldom unprepared for those occasions of solemnity or sorrow which are so interwoven with other things in the mingled yarn of which the web of our fate is constructed, and which seem always to be suspended over our heads as by a hair. My lady, it appeared, had, on the night in which she was brought home for dead, been very successful at play, and was in a humour of more than ordinary hilarity; and in stepping into her carriage, on leaving the party, she happened giddily to turn round, and, missing her footing, fell awkwardly back; and now the consequences were likely, from the condition she was in, to be fatal.

For three days I watched her, and listened to her ravings with melancholy apprehension. On the fourth, she seemed near her end, and began gazing in my face with restored reason and appalling steadfastness, as if she were taking her last look of me, then striving to move her hand to me she beckoned me close to her, and merely said, "Kiss me."

I stooped over her and kissed her burning lips

—she was not Mary Ogilvie, but she was my wife, and an elegant and accomplished woman. What a thought!—to see her dying before me, in the midst of the world's enjoyments.

A few tears came to her relief, as she lay gazing up at me; she then said, in a whisper, “George, I know I have been very foolish—you are too good for me—I cannot—” but, in striving to utter something more, she gave another piteous look, and, with a struggling sigh, expired.

Alas! thought I, when I had leisure to think, that the dance of life should thus suddenly terminate in the silence of death, with the sons of happiness and prosperity, while life is scarcely begun, while they but blossom in the sunshine of youth, and are yet in the greenness of their years. Within two short years I had been interested in two marriages, wherein anticipations were entertained of long life, and provision seemed laid up for much happiness. Young Craiglands stood in his manhood, like a strong man glorying in his strength; and my proud lady, decked in bridal glory, moved among her high bred circle, with the firm and

springy step of flowing health, and was given to my arms as the presumed mother of a long line of posterity.

But while the song of joy yet tingled in each of their ears—while the torch of life blazed bright—it was suddenly extinguished in the darkness of death—their forms already sleep in the dust, and the moralizing mind ponders sadly, and preaches solemnly, as it relates their tale.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER year passed tardily over my head as a youthful widower, while I again wandered abroad over the wide world, seeking novelty and finding sameness, and wondering why it was that, when I could purchase almost every thing I wished, yet could I not purchase happiness. Something still was wanting; and I at length left the vineyards of Italy, and the vales of Switzerland, and journeyed towards my early home, to look once more, at least, on the interesting scenes of my youth.

When the well known smell of the fields in the West of Scotland once more saluted me, I stopped for a few minutes to bait my horse, at the little village of Craeford, and deliberated by which of two roads I should proceed to my paternal property, now about three miles distant. One of the roads passed just between Craiglands and Lilly-

brae ; but I objected to taking that way, for my mind would not yet suffer me to run the hazard, by going near any of those places, of perhaps meeting with Mary Ogilvie. I had parted from the companion with whom I travelled, at Edinburgh ; for, in revisiting these interesting scenes, I wished not to be encumbered with the society of any one who might interrupt my unavoidable reflections.

I took the other road, though much the longest. The day was yet young ; and when I came to a height I stopped to survey the woods and valleys, so well known from my childhood. The sun shone beautifully ; the green heights and hollows lay in quiet loveliness before me ; the blue smoke, which curled upwards from the distant farms of Craiglands and Lillybrae, reflected the slanting sunbeams, and gave me the pleasing idea of peace and happiness within their dwellings. “What have I got,” I inquired of myself, “in return for refusing the blessings of competence and unbounded love, that invited my acceptance of them in these happy valleys ? The answer is, that in

grasping at wealth and greatness, I have only, with some portion of heartless pleasure, had ennui, disappointment, and disgust, and perhaps an unreasonably strong impression of the errors and follies of my species.

I arrived at home. My father had died in my absence, and my two sisters, who were now women, were rejoiced to see me, and looked towards me as a father and a protector. I was determined to do my duty to them; still other thoughts and purposes had at last taken powerful possession of my mind. Whether I had acted the fool hitherto, or whether I was really and incorrigibly a fool in the estimation of the world, I cared not to conclude. I thought I now understood, at least, a little better, what, foolish or not, was essential to my own happiness. I was convinced that, whatever nature had made me, I was no faultless hero of romance; and that, before I could act a becoming part in society, the cravings of my heart must be satisfied. I was not a being fitted to live only to myself, and I must possess the liberty of doing as my reason and dispositions

dictated—of loving what, in my own estimation, was lovely, of enjoying those few things in which I delighted, untrammelled by the maxims of other men; and of avoiding, as far as the general mixture of evil with good would suffer me, whatever I loathed, “in the corrupted current of this world.”

As soon, therefore, as I had disposed of the matters immediately incumbent on my attention, on my arrival, I sat down and wrote a note to Mary Ogilvie. I informed her of my intention again to take up my residence in the place where I had spent my juvenile youth; and conjured her, by our early love, to give me a meeting once more, on this night as soon as the moon rose, behind the little hill in Lillyburn Wood, as I had something of importance to say to her, and as we could not with propriety meet alone in either of our own houses.

The intervening time I spent in a fever of impatient agitation, of which, at the raw age of eighteen or nineteen, I believe myself to have been incapable. Marvellous! that experience which cools the fever of most men, should have, in fact,

fanned the fire of my passion; but, indeed, the more I saw of the world, and the more I understood of mankind, the higher I prized my Mary Ogilvie; and notwithstanding all that had occurred, the more eager I was to be united to her for ever. Had I judged right with reference to my own character and the world, I would have married her, or betrothed her to myself at first, and suffered no other man to become, even outwardly, connected with her; before both of our hearts had been somewhat seared by an acquaintance with the painful realities of life: but it was not yet three years since I had attended her wedding; I was still not more than five and twenty, she was three years younger: though we were both in the widowed state, we were yet in youth; and “what happiness!” I thought, “might we not still enjoy were we but united together.”

The moon rose in placid beauty o’er the silent valleys beneath Lillybrae, and its light glanced in flakes of silver upon the rippling stream near the wood, as I wandered behind the green hill, anxiously waiting for Mary. A thousand recollections

crowded upon me, connected with this sacred spot ; our meeting here on the day of her wedding, and the impressive circumstances of that night, the last occasion on which I had seen her. At length I observed a shadow moving on the grass round by the foot of the hill, and in a few moments Mary Ogilvie, wrapped in a mantle, with a timid step, drew near to the spot where I was waiting.

We stood for an instant, looking on one another, as if neither could speak or move. I stepped hastily forward, holding out both my hands. The embarrassment of the moment prevented her offering me hers. There was an eagerness to embrace ; but we seemed undecided, at the instant, whether it should be as friends, or as lovers. Passion prevailed — I threw my arms round her, and pressed her closely—she rested her head passionately on my shoulder ; or, rather, in the affecting language of Scripture, she “ fell upon my neck and wept.” I felt her limbs tremble beneath her with emotion, as she gave a sob or two, while hanging in my arms ; but when the first bursting out of her feelings was over, she started from me

suddenly, as if blaming herself for having thus given way to her weakness, and withdrew to a short distance

“Mr. George,” she said, speaking first, and in a tone of elevation, in which she seemed for a moment to forget her native tongue, “I find I cannot hide from you my feelings, or rather my weakness, even yet. You know the power you still have over me—I conjure you to say, at once, what your pleasure is, and let our conference be short!”

I was astonished and somewhat disconcerted, by the dignity and imperative energy of her words and manner, as the moon shone full upon her glowing countenance, such as I had often observed it when she was a girl; but now she was perfect in womanhood, and her eyes sparkled with passionate animation. “Mary,” I said, calmly, “I do not mean to detain you:—to give you the first word of confession, I believe I have lately been wandering from my own happiness. I was not happy in *my* marriage; will you tell me, Mary, if you were happy in *yours*?”

She stood looking up in my face, as if her soul drank every word that I uttered. After a pause, she answered firmly, "No, George, I was *not* happy, although I had an affectionate well-meaning husband; but it required something besides these common qualities, to make me happy, after having so long known you! But he was not—O, George! you have been the spoiler of my happiness!" she exclaimed, covering her face with her hands. "It would have been happy for me, if I never had seen you!"

"Mary," I answered, after an agitated pause, "it is useless now to dwell on the past, or to refer to the painful anxieties we have both experienced. It is useless, it is impious, as *I* find, to fight for ever against the constant yearnings of our own hearts!"

She still looked up in my face, with anxious curiosity, as I spoke. "Mary," I continued, "are you willing to understand me? Can you be *mine* at last?"

She clasped her hands together, and replied; "I can be any thing for you, George; but, for

Heaven's sake, think what you say ! Do not trifle with my feelings, or you will break my heart !”

“ *Will* you be mine, Mary, from this moment ?” I said passionately ; “ still be mine !—my wife—my love—my adored companion while life is granted to us on earth—Speak !”

“ Oh, *yes*, George !” she said with energy ; “ I will be any thing—every thing for you, consistent with honour—if you will, indeed, be also mine,” she added, with her peculiar doubting and beseeching expression of countenance, “ if you will really make *me* your wedded wife, who am nae gentlewoman, but only your simple country Mary Ogilvie.”

Tears of rapture streamed from both our eyes, as, in broken sentences and passionate language, this final settlement of our long cherished wishes was proposed and consented to between us ; and the free embrace of surrendered hearts and confiding honour was indulged in as a pledge of accepted vows, and an anticipation of future and unreserved bliss.

The fever of my spirits was now over, my mind

was calm, and my heart light; I was happy, and Mary was happy, and nature seemed happy around me. The very moon, as the old ballad has it, seemed to "shine blithe in my face," as I bounded homewards; and, as disregarding the opinion of the world, I rejoiced in the prospect of obtaining, at last, my yet lovely and blooming Mary Ogilvie.

CHAPTER VI.

YEARS again passed away, and the chapter of my history is nearly completed. I sat in my favourite room, one delicious morning, in a musing mood, which was only disturbed by the entrance of my steward, who ended some consultation, about my rural affairs, by remarking that this was the twenty-fifth of August, and then left me.

After he had departed, I continued to repeat to myself his words, "This is the twenty-fifth of August," as I sat, with my little daughter standing between my knees, musing, and parting, with my fingers, the yellow hair upon her forehead. "The twenty-fifth of August," I said again; but the thought did not immediately strike me, why it was that I noticed that more than any other date.

At length, while contemplating the cherry cheeks of my little daughter, and in my parental

musings over her, I said, "Yes! now I recollect—the twenty-fifth of August was my last wedding day; for on this day of the month, five years ago, I married my Mary." My mind received a direct impulse from recollecting this circumstance, and I was led to turn my musings into a review of the five years since I had married from the free choice both of my judgment and my heart.

"Where shall I begin," I exclaimed, "to recount my happiness? The common blessings of life,—health, competence, peace, liberty, and society, are enhanced a thousand times by the presence and participation of my Mary. In summer, which I spend in the country, improving my estate, and co-operating with my tenants in whatever is for our mutual advantage, she is my constant society and affectionate adviser. My spirits are gay when I am abroad on little plans of improvement or of pleasure: and on my return, she meets me with smiles of welcome; and I sit down in a contented and happy household, to fondle our children, and to talk with her, over the little affairs of the neighbourhood, which to us are

pleasing and interesting. When I attend to my duty as justice of the peace, to hear the complaints and decide the petty differences of the countrymen, they say, that the good-humour of my countenance, and the serene contentment of my eye, almost make them forget their quarrels. I often get them to join hands and agree, without ever troubling me with their story: and, though still a young man, my goings out and comings in, my easy and contented habits, are considered exemplary, and almost patriarchal.

“ We spend the winter commonly in Edinburgh; and in that delightful capital, my wife and I enjoy the society of some, perhaps, as elegant and accomplished people as there are in the world; whose minds are well cultivated, and stored with all that tends to elevate and adorn humanity; and with whom, in a kind of homely gentility, we hold a social intercourse.

“ How often do I observe with pride, and sometimes with surprise, the manner in which my Mary acquits herself among society, born and educated in a much more elevated and expensive

manner than can fall to the lot of a farmer's daughter ! How much natural judgment and good taste she evinces in all she does and says : how much worth breathes in her sentiments and speaks in her eye ! How much benevolence towards every one, and ardent love towards me ! With what chaste good sense she assists me in culling from life and literature whatever is delightful and improving ! How pleasingly we interchange observation and criticism in society, or amusement abroad ! How cheerily happy our conversation by our warm fireside ! When, in the winter's night, the tea-urn hisses on the table, as Cowper says, and the window-curtains are let fall—our chairs drawn round the fireside, books spread on the table, the children playing on the hearth ; study and conversation by turns, and music of our own performance occasionally, perhaps, according to our fancy, draws out its lengthened sweetness : what is earthly happiness, if this is not happiness ?

“ We return to this place in the country,” said I, continuing my soliloquy, and walking towards

the window, “when green spring clothes the fields and the woods, and the sun begins to shine warm on Arnefield, where I live, and on the haughs and streams of Lillybrae. Our return is welcomed with rejoicings: we are followed with blessings! My children leap, wild with joy, at returning to the novelty of the country; and a thousand things wait for my adjustment, to give me consequence and keep me employed.

“Still, Mary Ogilvie is the corner-stone of my happiness, and I am every thing to her. Her eye beams upon me, across the table, with love and gratitude, for taking her from society to which she was naturally superior, and raising her to her present condition; for bringing her home to my own bosom, and making her truly happy. Her presence consecrates to me the house in which she lives, and every thing with which she has to do. My eye follows her, as in gay contentment she moves lightly through the apartments, and fondly cherishes my darling children. The very sound of her fine feminine voice in the next room, or in the passages, strikes on my ear

with heartfelt pleasure; and at night when, as I sit musing by the fire, I sometimes hear that voice warbling plaintively, in rich tones, wild and fanciful wood notes, to sing my babies to their rest, it takes captive my spirit by its soothing echoes in my quiet country dwelling, and often brings tears from my eyes, by its affecting associations.

“This place,” said I, throwing up the sash of the window, and looking out upon the undulating fields, distant mountains, and more distant sea, “is a paradise to me, since she came to it. The evils of artificial life I have almost forgotten; for here they are ‘for ever hid from my eyes!’—Time steals away too fast in quiet enjoyment, and I look back upon my early ambition and purposes with a kind of uneasy terror. Blessed with ample competence, and cured of ambition, I am enabled to select, as friends and associates, those, who from among the glitter of the high and the ignorance of the low, have seen and appreciated what is substantially good in human nature, who still find ‘heads that think, and hearts that feel!’ where ambition or mercenary selfishness has not tempted

men to suppress or extinguish the amiable propensities implanted in the human bosom.

“The country becomes more congenial to me as my circle of happiness draws more closely round my family. My study at home, and my rambles through the woods, diversify my rural enjoyments; and science and poetry come in for a share in employing the enthusiastic activity of my mind.

“The beauty of my estate, and of the surrounding neighbourhood, is increasing yearly; and this house of my fathers,—this land of my childhood, becomes dearer to me every hour!”—I found myself unable to express fully what I felt, and quoted Shakespeare:—

“ I should guess,
If e'er content deigned visit mortal clime,
This was her place of dearest residence !”

MY SISTER KATE.

MY SISTER KATE.

I travelled far to know her state,
 Who had a lofty lot ;
And I heard, and I saw,
 And I envied her not.
So I'll remain at home content,
 Until the day I dee,
With a lowly peaceful life,
 In my ain countree.

Scrap Stanzas.

THERE is a low road (but it is not much frequented, for it is terribly round about,) that passes at the foot of the range of hills that skirt the long and beautiful gut or Firth of the Clyde, in the west of Scotland: and as you go along this road, either up or down, the sea or firth is almost at your very

side, the hills rising above you ; and you are just opposite to the great black and blue mountains on the other side of the gut, that sweep in heavy masses, or jut out in bold capes, at the mouth of the deep lochs that run up from the Firth into the picturesque highlands of Argyleshire.

You may think of the scene what you please, because steam-boating has, of late years, profaned it somewhat into commonness, and defiled its pure air with filthy puffs of coal smoke ; and because the Comet and all her unfortunate passengers were sunk to the bottom of this very part of the Firth ; and because, a little time previous, a whole boatful of poor highland reaper girls were also run down in the nighttime, while they were asleep, and drowned near the Clough lighthouse hard by ; but if you were to walk this road by the seaside any summer afternoon, going towards the bathing village of Gourock, you would say, as you looked across to the highlands, and up the Clyde, towards the rock of Dumbarton Castle, that there are few scenes more truly magnificent and interesting.

There is a little village exactly opposite to you,

looking across the Firth, which is called Dunoon, and contains the burying place of the great House of Argyle; and which, surrounded by a patch of green cultivated land, sloping pleasantly from the sea, and cowering snugly by itself, with its picturesque cemetery, under the great blue hills frowning behind, looks, from across the Firth, absolutely like a tasteful little haunt of the capricious spirit of romance.

Well, between this road, on the lowland side of the Firth, and the water's edge, and before it winds off round by the romantic seat of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, farther up; there stands, or stood, two or three small fishing cottages, which, from the hills nearly over them, from which General Brisbane used to look after the stars, or from the sea as you sailed past; looked just like white shells, of a large size, dropped fancifully down upon the green common between the hills and the road. In these cottages, it was observed, the fishermen had numerous families, who, while young, assisted them in their healthful employment; and that the girls, of which there was a

number, were so wild in their contented seclusion, that if any passenger on the road stopped to observe them, as they sat in groups on the green, mending their fathers' nets, they would take alarm, and rise and run off like fawns, and hide among the rocks by the sea, or trip back into the cottages. Now it happened, once on a time, that a great event took place to one of the cottager's daughters, which, for a long period, deranged and almost destroyed the happy equality in which they had hitherto lived ; and becoming the theme of discourse and inquiry concerning things beyond the sphere of the fisher people and all their neighbours, as far as Gourock, introduced among them no small degree of ambition and discontent.

There was one of the fishermen, a remarkably decent, well disposed highlandman, from the opposite shore of Argyleshire, named Martin M'Leod, and he had two daughters, the youngest of which, as was no uncommon case, turned out to be remarkably and even delicately beautiful.

But nobody ever saw or thought any thing about the beauty of Catharine M'Leod, except it

might be some of the growing young men in the neighbouring cottages, several of whom began, at times, to look at her with a sort of wonder, and seemed to feel a degree of awe in her company ; while her family took an involuntary pride in her beyond all the others ; and her eldest sister somehow imitated her in every thing, and continually quoted her talk, and trumpeted about among the neighbours what was said and done by “ my sister Kate.”

Things continued in this way as Kate grew to womanhood ; and she was the liveliest little body about the place, and used to sing so divertingly at the house-end, as she busied herself about her father’s fishing gear, and ran up and down “ among the brekans on the brae,” behind the cottages, or took her wanderings off all the way to the Clough lighthouse at the point ; or she would skip on the yellow sands of the sea, beyond her father’s boat, when the tide was low, as he used to say, just like a water-wagtail ; so that she was allowed to be as merry as she was pretty, and put every one in a good humour that looked at her. I say things

continued in this way until a gentleman, who, it turned out, was all the way from London, came to lodge in Greenock, or Gourrock, or Innerkip, or somewhere not very far distant; and, being a gentleman, and, of course, at liberty to do every sort of out of the way thing that he pleased, he got a manner of coming down and wandering about among the cottages, and asking questions concerning whatever he chose of the fishermen; and then it was not long until he got his eyes upon Kate.

“The gentleman,” as her sister used to tell afterwards, “was perfectly ill, and smitten at once about our Kate. He was not able,” she said, “to take the least rest, but was down constantly about us for weeks; and then he got to talking to and walking with Kate, she linking arm in his beneath the hill, just as it had been Sir Michael Stewart and my lady; and then such presents as he used to bring for her, bought in the grand shop of Bailie Macnicol, at Greenock; gowns, and shawls, and veils, and fine chip hats, never speaking of ribbons, an’ lace edging, an’ mob caps—perfect beautiful.”

The whole of the other fishermen's daughters became mad with envy of poor Kate, and admiration of her new dress, which some said was mostly bought by her father, after all, who wanted to have his daughter made a lady of; and now nothing was heard in the hamlet but murmurings and discontented complaints; every girl looking at herself in the little cracked glass, that her father used to shave by, to see if she were pretty, and wishing and longing, not only for a lover of her own, but even for a gentleman. So, as matters grew serious, and the gentleman was fairly in love, old Martin M'Leod, who looked sharply after Kate, behoved to have sundry conversations with the gentleman about her; and masters being appointed to teach her right things, which the fisher folks never heard of, but which were to turn her into a lady, Kate and the gentleman, after a time were actually married, in Greenock new church, and set off for London, or some other grand place, to live where the king and all the great people lived, and to drink wine and wheel about in a carriage for evermore.

During all this time, there were various opinions among the fisher people, how that Kate never was particularly in love with the gentleman; and some even said that she was in love with somebody else (for pretty maidens must always be in love), or at least, that some of the youths of the neighbourhood were in love with her; but then the old folks said, that love was only for gentle-people who could afford to pay for it; and that when a gentleman was pleased to fall in love, no one had a right to say him nay, or pretend to set up against him. Some of the young women, to be sure, ventured to contest this doctrine, and cited various cases from the authority of printed ballads bought at the Greenock fair, at a half-penny each; and also from the traditionary literature of Argyleshire, which was couched in the melifluous numbers of the Gaelic language; but, however this might be, the fame of Catherine M'Leod's happy marriage, and great fortune, was noised abroad, exceedingly, among the fisher people throughout these coasts, as well as about Gourrock and all the parts adjacent.

As to the gentleman, it was found out that his

name was Mr. Pounteney, and that little Kate M'Leod was now Mrs. Pounteney, and a great London lady; but what quality of a gentleman Mr. Pounteney really was, was a matter of much controversy and discussion. Some said that he was a great gentleman, and others thought that, from various symptoms, he was not a *very* great gentleman;—some went so far as to say he was a lord or a prince, while others maintained that he was only a simple esquire, although he might yet be turned into a belted knight, or baronet, like Sir Michael who lived in the neighbourhood, which the king could make him, any day he chose, by knocking him down with a sword; for it was part of the king's business to make knights and lords, and this was the way he did it. But as the fisher people, among whom Kate had been reared, did not understand what a knight meant, nor any thing of these high matters; and from the rising ambition of fisher girls, to get gentlemen as well as Kate, were much occupied in discussions about the quality of her and her husband; her elder sister, Flora, was constantly appealed to, and

drawn out wherever she went, upon this interesting subject.

Nothing, therefore, could be talked of wherever Flora M'Leod went, but about "my sister, Kate;" and she was quite in request every where, because she could talk of the romantic history and happy fortune of her lucky sister. Mrs. Pounteney's house in London, therefore, Mrs. Pounteney's grand husband, and Mrs. Pounteney's coach, excited the admiration and the discontent of all the fishermen's daughters, for many miles round this romantic sea coast and these quiet cottages under the hills, where the simple people lived upon their fish and did not know that they were happy. Many a long summer's day, as the girls sat working their nets on a knoll towards the sea, the sun that shone warm upon their indolent limbs on the grass, and the breeze that blew from the Firth, or swept round from the flowery woods of Ardgowan, seemed less grateful and delicious, from their discontented imaginings about the fortune of Mrs. Pounteney; and many a sweet and wholesome supper of fresh boiled fish was made to lose its former

relish, or was even embittered by obtrusive discourse about the fine wines and the gilded grandeur of "my sister, Kate." Even the fisher lads in the neighbourhood, fine fearless youths, found a total alteration in their sweethearts; their discourse was not relished, their persons were almost despised; and there was now no happiness found for a fisherman's daughter, but what was at least to approach to the state of grandeur and felicity so fortunately obtained by "my sister Kate."

The minds of Kate's family were so carried by her great fortune, that vague wishes and discontented repinings followed their constant meditations upon her lucky lot. Flora had found herself above marrying a fisherman; and a young fellow, called Bryce Cameron, who had long waited for her, and whose brother, Allan, was once a sweetheart of Kate's herself, being long ago discarded; and she not perceiving any chances of a gentleman making his appearance to take Bryce's place, became melancholy and thoughtful; she began to fear that she was to have nobody, and her thoughts ran constantly after London and Mrs.

Pounteney. With these anxious wishes, vague hopes began to mix of some lucky turn to her own fortune, if she were only in the way of getting to be a lady; and at length she formed the high wish, and even the adventurous resolve, of going all the way to London, just to get one peep at her sister's happiness.

When this ambition seized Flora M'Leod, she let the old people have no rest, nor did she spare any exertion to get the means of making her proposed pilgrimage to London. In the course of a fortnight from its first serious suggestion, she, with a gold guinea in her pocket, and two one pound notes of the Greenock bank, besides other coins and valuables, and even a little old fashioned Highland broach, with which the quondam lover of her sister, Allan Cameron, had the temerity to intrust to her, to be specially returned into the hands of the great lady when she should see her, besides a hundred other charges and remembrances from the neighbours, she set off one dewy morning in summer, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, to make her way to London, to

get a sight of every thing great, and particularly of her happy sister Kate.

Many a weary mile did Flora M'Leod walk, and ride, and sail, through unknown places, and in what she called foreign parts; for strange things and people met her eye, and long dull regions of country passed her like a rapid vision, as she was wheeled towards the great capital and proper centre of England. After travelling to a distance that was to her perfectly amazing, she was set down in London, and inquired her way, in the best English she could command, into one of those long brick streets, of dark and dull gentility, to which she was directed; and after much trouble and some expense, at length found the door of her sister's house. She stood awhile considering, on the steps of the mansion, and felt a sort of fear of lifting the big iron knocker that seemed to grin down upon her; for she was not in the habit of knocking at great folk's doors, and almost trembled lest somebody from within would frown her into nothing, even by their high and lofty looks.

And yet she thought the house was not so

dreadfully grand after all ;—not at all such as she had imagined, for she had passed houses much bigger and grander than this great gentleman's ; it was not even the largest in its own street, and looked dull and dingy, and shut up with blinds and rails, having a sort of melancholy appearance. At least it was not at all equal, she thought, to many of the white stone villas by the Firth of Clyde, that sate so proudly on the hill face, opposite the sea, near her father's cottage, with their doors wide open to receive the summer air or welcome the passing traveller, and their windows gleaming in the evening sun, before it dipped behind the big mountains of Argyleshire.

It was strange that reflections about home, and so enhancing of its value, should pass through her mind at the very door where lived her envied sister in London ! but she must not linger, but see what was inside. She lifted up the iron knocker, and as it fell the very clang of it, and its echo inside, smote upon her heart with a sensation of strange apprehension. A powdered man opened it, and stared at her with an inquisitive imperti-

nent look, then saucily asked what she wanted. Flora courtesied low to the servant from perfect terror, saying she wanted to see Mrs. Pounteney.

“And what can *you* want with Mrs. Pounteney, young woman, I should like to know?” said the fellow; for Flora neither looked like a milliner’s woman, nor any other sort of useful person likely to be wanted by a lady.

Flora had laid various pretty plans in her own mind, about taking her sister by surprise, and seeing how she would look at her before she spoke, and so forth; at least she had resolved not to affront her, by making herself known as her sister before the servants; but the man looked at her with such suspicion, and spoke so insolent, that she absolutely began to fear, from the interrogations of this fellow, that she would be refused admittance to her own sister, and was forced to explain and reveal herself, before the outer door was fully opened to her. At length she was conducted, on tiptoe, along a passage, and then up stairs, until she was placed in a little back dressing-room. The servant then went into the draw-

ing-room, where sat two ladies at opposite sides of the apartment, there to announce Flora's message.

On a sofa, near the window, sat a neat youthful figure, extremely elegantly formed, but petite, with a face that need not be described, further than that the features were small and pretty, and that, as a whole, it was rich in the nameless expression of simple beauty. Her dress could not have been plainer, to be of silk of the best sort; but the languid discontent, if not melancholy, with which the female, yet quite in youth, gazed towards the window, or bent over a little silk netting with which she carelessly employed herself, seemed to any observer strange and unnatural at her time of life. At a table near the fire was seated a woman, almost the perfect contrast to this interesting figure, in the person of Mr. Pounteney's eldest sister, a hard-faced, business-like person, who, with pen and ink before her, seemed busy among a parcel of household accounts, and the characteristic accompaniment of a bunch of keys occasionally rattling at her elbow.

The servant approached, as if fearful of being

noticed by "the old one," as he was accustomed to call Miss Pounteney, and in a half whisper, intimated to the little figure, that a female wanted to see her.

"Eh! what!—what is it you say, John?" cried the lady among the papers, noticing this manœuvre of the servant.

"Nothing, Madam; it is a person that wants my lady."

"Your lady, sirrah! it must be me!—Eh! what!"

"No, madam; she wants to see Mrs. Pounteney particularly."

"Ah, John!" said the little lady on the sofa; "just refer her to Miss Pounteney. There is nobody can want me."

"Wants to see Mrs. Pounteney particularly!" resumed the sister-in-law: "how dare you bring in such a message, sirrah? Mrs. Pounteney particularly, indeed! who is she, sirrah! Who comes here with such a message while I am in the house?"

"You must be mistaken, John," said the little lady sighing, who was once the lively Kate

M'Leod of the fishing cottage in Scotland ; "just let Miss Pounteney speak to her. You need not come to me."

"No, madam," said the servant, addressing Miss Pounteney, the natural pertness of his situation now returning to overcome his dread of *the ould one!* This young person wants to see my mistress directly, and I have put her into her dressing-room : pray ma'm, go," he added, respectfully, to the listless Kate.

"Do you come here to give *your* orders, sirrah?" exclaimed Miss Pounteney, rising like a fury, and kicking the footstool half way across the room, "and to put strange people of your own accord into any dressing-room in this house! and to talk of *your mistress*, and wanting to speak to her directly, and privately, while *I* am here! I wonder what sister Becky would say, or Mr. Pounteney, if he were at home?"

The "ould one's" wrath being now aroused, she next diverged into a tirade of abuse of John, for various crimes and misdemeanours, with which her examination of the documents before her fur-

nished matter of accusation against him, on household matters, and into which she contrived to include the trembling little victim on the sofa. While she was at the height of this, her sister Becky entered the room; and, as usual, helped up the brawl, or rather added fuel to the angry storm with which she raged against the man; who listened with the true sneer of a lackey, made insolent by unladylike abuse; and also against the unoffending and melancholy Kate, who bore it all with a look of hopeless resignation.

John, however, coxcomb as he sometimes was, had too much natural gallantry not to feel strongly on the part of his oppressed mistress; and too much common sense not to see the misery of a house divided against itself; besides, he hated his two real mistresses as much as he loved the interesting stranger, who ought to have been such. Without taking notice, therefore, of all the accusations and abuse thrown upon him, he stepped up again to the little figure on the sofa, and begged of her to see the young person who waited for her.

“I’ll have no whispering here !” exclaimed Miss Pounteney, coming forward in wrath,—“ what is the meaning of all this, Kate?—who is this person in your dressing-room ?—I *insist* upon knowing : I shall let my brother know all about this secrecy !”

“ Who is it, John ? Do just bring her here, and put an end to this !” said Kate, imploringly, to the man.

“ Madam,” said John at last to his trembling mistress,—“ it is your sister !”

“ Who, John ?” cried Kate, starting to her feet ; “ my sister Flora, my own sister, from Clyde side ! speak, John, are you sure ?”

“ Yes, Madam, your sister from Scotland.”

“ Oh, where is she, where is she ? let me go.”

“ No, no ; you must be mistaken, John ;” said the lady with the keys, stepping forward to interrupt the anxious Kate ; “ John, this is all a mistake,” she added, smoothly ; “ Mrs. Pounteney has no sister ! John, you may leave the room :” and she gave a determined look to the other sister, who stood astonished.

The moment the servant left the room, Miss

Pounteney came forward, and stood in renewed rage over the fragile melancholy Kate, and burst out with "What is this, Kate? Is it really possible, after what you know of my mind, and all our minds, that you have dared to bring your poor relations into my brother's house? That it is not enough that we are to have the disgrace of your mean connections, but we are to have your sisters and brothers to no end coming into the very house, and sending up their beggarly names and designations by the very servants! Kate, I must not permit this. I will not, I shall not:" and she stamped with rage.

"Oh, Miss Pounteney," said Kate, with clasped hands, "will you not let me go and see my sister? Will you just let me go and weep on the neck of my poor Flora? I will go to a private place, I will go to another house if you please; I will do any thing when I return to you, if I ever return, for I care not if I never come into this unhappy house more!" and, uttering this, almost with a shriek, she burst past the two women, and ran through the rooms to seek her sister.

Meantime Flora had sat so long waiting, without seeing her sister, that she began to feel intense anxiety; and, fancying her little Kate wished to forget her, because she was poor, had worked herself up into a resolution of assumed coldness, when she heard a hurried step, and the door was instantly opened. Kate paused for a moment after her entrance, and stood gazing upon the companion of her youth, with a look of such passionate joy, that Flora's intended coldness was entirely subdued; and the two sisters rushed into each other's arms in all the ecstasy of sisterly love.

"Oh, Flora, Flora! my dear happy Flora!" cried Kate, when she could get words, after the first burst of weeping; "have you really come all the way to London to see me? poor me!" and her tears and sobs were again like to choke her.

"Kate, my dear little Kate!" said Flora, "this is not the way I expected to find you. Do not greet so dreadfully; surely you are not happy, Kate!"

"But *you* are happy, Flora;" said Kate, weeping; "and how is my good highland father, and

mother, and my brother Daniel? Ah! I think, Flora, your clothes have the very smell of the sea-shore, and of the bark of the nets, and of the heather hills of Argyleshire. Alas! the happy days you remind me of, Flora."

"And so, Kate, you are not so *very* happy, after all," said Flora, looking incredulously in her face, "and you are so thin, and pale, and your eyes are so red; and yet you have such a grand house, Kate! Tell me if you are really not happy?"

"I have no house, Flora;" said Kate, after a little, "nor, I may say, no husband. They are both completely ruled by his two vixen sisters, who kept house for him before he married me, and still have the entire ascendancy over him. My husband, too, is not naturally good tempered; yet he once loved me, and I might enjoy some little happiness in this new life, if he had the feeling or the spirit to treat me as his wife, and free himself and the house from the dominion of his sisters, especially the eldest. But I believe he is rather disappointed in his ambitious career, and in the hopes he entertained of matches for his sisters, and is somewhat

sour and unhappy; and I have to bear it all, for he is afraid of these women; and I, the youngest in the family, and the only one who has a chance of being good tempered, am, on account of my low origin, forced to bear the spleen of all in this unhappy house."

"But, Kate, surely your husband would not behave so bad as to cast up to you that your father was a fisherman, when he took you from the bonnie seaside himself, and when he thought himself once so happy to get you?"

"Alas! he does indeed!—too often—too often; when he is crossed abroad, and when his sisters set him on; and that is very mean of him; and it so humbles me, Flora, when I am sitting at his table, that I cannot lift my head; and I am so sad, and so heart-broken among them all!"

"Bless me! and can people be really so miserable," said Flora, simply, "who have plenty of money, and silk dresses to wear every day they rise?"

"It is little you know, my happy Flora, of artificial life here in London," said Kate, mournfully.

“As for dress, I cannot even order one but as my sister-in-law chooses; and as for happiness, I have left it behind me on the beautiful banks of the Clyde. Oh, that I were there again!”

“Poor little Kate!” said Flora, wistfully looking again in her sister’s face; “and is that the end of all your grand marriage, that has set a’ the lasses crazy, from the Fairly Roads to Gourrock Point. I think I’ll gang back and marry Bryce Cameron after a’.”

“Is Allan Cameron married yet?” said Kate, sadly. “When did you see blithe and bonnie Allan Cameron?—Alas! the day!”

“He gave me this brooch to return to you, Kate,” said Flora, taking the brooch out of her bosom. “I wish he had not gien it to me for you, for you’re vex’d enough already.”

“Ah! well you may say I am vex’d enough,” said she, weeping and contemplating the brooch. “Tell Allan Cameron, that I am sensible I did not use him well—that my vain heart was lifted up; but I have suffered for it—many a sad and sleepless night I have lain in my bed, and thought of

the delightful days I spent near my father's happy cottage in Scotland, and about you, and about Allan. Alas ! just tell him not to think more of me ; for I am a sad and sorry married woman, out of my own sphere, and afraid to speak to my own people, panting my heart out and dying by inches, like the pretty silver fish that floundered on the hard stones, after my father had taken them out of their own clear water."

" God help you, Kate !" said Flora, rising ; " you will break my heart with grief about you. Let me out of this miserable house ! Let me leave you and all your grandeur, since I cannot help you ; and I will pray for you, my poor Kate, every night at my bedside, when I get back to the bonnie shore of Argyleshire."

Sad was the parting of the two weeping sisters, and many a kiss of fraternal affection embittered, yet sweetened, the hour ; and anxious was Flora M'Leod to turn her back upon the great city of London, and to journey northwards to her own home in Scotland.

It was a little before sun-down, on a Saturday

evening, shortly after this, that a buzz of steam, let off at the Mid Quay of Greenock, indicated that a steam-boat had come in ; and it proved to be from the fair sea port of Liverpool, having on board Flora M'Leod, just down from London. The boat, as it passed, had been watched by the cottagers where she lived up the Firth ; and several of them, their day's work being over, set out towards the Clough to see if there was any chance of meeting Flora.

Many were the congratulations, and more the inquiries, when they met Flora, lumbering homewards with her bundle and her umbrella, weary, and looking anxiously out for her own sweet cottage by Clyde side. " Ah, Flora ! is this you !" cried the whole at once ; " and are you really here again—and how is your sister, and all the other great people in London ? and, indeed, it is very good of you not to look the least proud, after coming from such a grand place !"

With such congratulations was Flora welcomed again among the light-hearted fisher people in the West of Scotland. But it was observed, that her

tone was now quite altered, and her own humble contentment had completely returned. In short, to bring our story to a close, she was shortly after married to Bryce Cameron, and various other marriages soon followed ; for she gave such an account of what she had seen with her eyes, that a complete revolution took place in the sentiments of the whole young people of the neighbourhood.

It was observed, in the hamlet, that the unhappy Mrs. Pounteney was never named, after this, by any but with a melancholy shake of the head ; the ambition of the girls, to get gentlemen, seemed quite extinguished ; and Flora, in time, began to nurse children of her own in humble and pious contentment.

She received many letters after this from London, over which she often wept to herself, while she prayed in private that poor Mrs. Pounteney might yet experience happier days ; but she was never heard to utter one vaunting word more concerning “ my sister Kate.”

WEE WATTY.

WEE WATTY,

A SURGEON STUDENT'S TALE.

Tread light and cautious o'er these hollow graves :
I tell you, at the dismal midnight hour
A churchyard is not safe.

Scrap Stanzas.

THERE is not a pleasanter walk all round the heartsome city of Glasgow, than that down by the side of the Clyde towards Dumbarton; and you may go either on the green sod, by the edge of the river, passing Kelvenhaugh and the Inch, or on the level high road towards the old-fashioned town of Renfrew; nor can a man drink a civil tumbler of Islay or Glenlivett, any where after his walk with greater gusto, than in the big room upstairs in the house of David Craighorn, the patriarchal publican of the sweet village of Long Govan. The very lass that comes smirking in

with the gill stoup and the glass, with the bottle of small beer, sparkling like soda or champagne, and the bit of oat cake to dry your teeth, is a perfect pleasure to see; and Miss Craighorn herself was really—but she's married now!

I had taken my walk that way, in company with a friend, one pleasant Friday afternoon, for I hate your Sunday stragglers; and I would not be seen in David Craighorn's, on the Lord's day, for any money! and when we had walked through the town of Govan, my friend and I sauntered into the churchyard. It is perfect truth that we did go into the churchyard, for it is quite open to those who pass that way; and it is just as true that we went in, not to write or speak any palavers about it, or to be sentimental or silly, but merely to rest ourselves, and look about: and there is not a prettier churchyard in which a man can set his foot, than the quiet and picturesque burying-ground round the old church in Govan.

“I think it odd,” said I to my friend, “in looking round this old village, that somehow my recollections of every place to which I was accustomed to

wander in my boyish days, are associated with some living person, whom I always think I ought to find about the same spot where I used to observe him the first time I explored the village or hamlet. Now I remember, many years ago, that I never could pass through Govan, or cross the ferry to Partick, or linger about the green, by the side of Clyde, watching the fishers in the salmon season, without seeing the lively face and active figure of a little man, whose image, even at this moment, is connected with every interesting recollection of the neighbourhood.

“ I cannot name the person whom I have so often seen, both on this, and the opposite side of the river : for I never knew him by any other but the characteristic appellation of Wee Watty ! by which he was well known to all the men that loved idleness, and all the boys that loved sport ; and these formed the majority, all round the villages of Partick and Long Govan. I wonder what has become of him now.”

“ Did you know Wee Watty, too ? ” said my companion.

“Yes,” said I; “I remember him as well as I remember the mound, at the back of David Craighorn’s house; and I remember things far later than that, which is remarkable. I remember Bauldy Brochan, he who played Baillie Nicol Jarvie, in the big Glasgow theatre, to the great laughter of the spruce critics! who used to talk small literature in the back-shop of Messrs. M’Cricket and M’Crocket, the booksellers. But puir Bauldy was driven to the dogs wi’ play acting, an’ comic singing! an’ kept a ’change-house, t’other side of Clyde, just beside the ferryhouse. I remember, in my rambles by Clyde side, I used to see Bauldy in the fine summer mornings, sitting on the stone at his door half-dressed, fiddling away to himself, on an old fiddle, as zealously as if he had had the whole musical society listening to his wretched scraping. When he observed me watching him, he used to get up from the stone, and dance and cut capers on the green before his door, grinning and laughing, for a momentary amusement to himself and me! for I could have sworn that he had not a sixpence in his pocket!—

but he's dead now, poor body! and so, I suppose, is Wee Watty."

"Wee Watty is dead!" said my companion; "I'll take any oath of that."

"Poor body!" said I; "is he gone?"—You surgeons speak so hard-heartedly about death.—But where are you going, friend?"

"I am just going to take a look through this churchyard," said he, as I followed him among the graves. "I feel quite at home in Govan churchyard," he added.

"Do you, faith?"

"Oh, yes; I could pass the night as pleasantly in it as in my own room. Man, I know every stone and corner in it! fine soft ground, and—but that infernal low wall next the road, I never liked that."

"In truth, Mr. —, you do seem to be quite comfortable here. I do not half like the way that you surgeons look at a kirk yard. It's so like a hungry thief at a henroost. Had you ever any jobs hereabouts, Doctor?"

"Some few," he said, with a dry laugh.

“And did you really dare to come to this pleasant spot, like a thief in the night, and howk an’ guddle amang yird an’ rotten banes, an’ purloin the vera dead out o’ their graves? Indeed, I canna look at you.”

“Hoot,” said he, “don’t be so warm; it was only when we were prentices; and it was our duty, as junior surgeons, to assist. Besides, isn’t it for the benefite of science?”

“The benefite o’ the deevil,” said I, speaking broader Scotch as I grew warmer; “I’ll never believe that the half o’ the dead corpses that are howked up are wanted for science. Isn’t every impudent boy, whose silly parents have put to be a surgeon, instead of sending him to make garments, or mend shoes, ambitious not only to possess two or three suits of sculls and bones, but must have as many legs and arms to cut an’ slash at, or rather to show off to his brother boys, as his father will give him money to buy of the principal thief? Have not I myself been brought into dark closets, and down to cellars, to see—bah! it turns my stomach to think o’t!”

“ Well, well,” said he, “ right or wrong, young surgeons do such things ; and we’re not going to argue about it this fine night. I was going to tell you about Wee Watty.”

“ Very well ; and if you really were implicated in such dirty jobs, and ——”

“ You shall hear. In fact that was a service that I believe I had a sort of natural taste for, which I know was also the case with some others in the anatomy class ; merely, I suppose, because it was so adventurous ; for if we got fairly to work in a churchyard at night, we were sure to get into some confounded scrape before the morning.

“ Now this very churchyard was a favourite spot for our nocturnal attempts ; it stood so well out from the houses, and the people in the village went so early to bed, and there were no watchmen to cause us any alarm. But yet, sometimes, we had hard tugs for it, which I may now tell you of ; for it was long ago, long before Bauldy Brochan’s time ; and one of the greatest plagues we had to deal with was this very Wee Watty.”

My friend, the surgeon, here took a snuff, and thus continued his story :

“There never was such a body as Watty. Come into the village by any end, or through any street, come across the Clyde by the ferry, or through by this churchyard, you were sure to meet Watty. If ever there was a game on the green by the water-side, or a salmon-fishing extraordinary; if ever there was a row between the Govan weavers and the millers of Partick; if ever there was a drunken squabble, about David Craighorn’s door, wi’ the Glasgow sma’ clerks, or a battle on a Sunday night, after the Govan sacrament, Wee Watty was sure to be in the middle o’t.

“But it was not only in the day that Watty was present at every thing, and ready for any thing. I declare, on my conscience, I believe the man never slept a wink, if, indeed, he ever went to bed; for, when we had a darksome job in Govan, our only objection and terror was Watty. We knew Watty’s omnipresence so well, both by day and by night, and were so sure of his activity, that, had it not been for him, there would not have been a better churchyard than this within ten miles, to supply, in those days, the anatomical students of the College of Glasgow.”

“ But I hope there is nothing of that kind done in this churchyard now, Doctor !” interrupted I.

“ No, not now ;” said he. “ But never trouble yourself ; just let me tell my story. Well, Sir, it was a favourite walk of us young fellows ; and we often used to go down to this place to see what we could see. One afternoon we strolled out, and, taking a turn through this churchyard, as if carelessly, and without intent, we found a new-made grave, in a snug convenient spot near the wall, and we put a mark to it and the contiguous tombstones, that we might easily find it in the dark.

“ Accordingly, we came down again from Glasgow the same night, a little after midnight ; and, having left an old gig, with which we usually travelled upon these expeditions, in a lane near the village, we divided our party, to prevent suspicion, and came by different routes to the place of meeting, at the corner of the churchyard. There were, in all, three of us, stout, active youths, provided with a portable pickaxe, a spade that folded up, ropes, and a sack, a dark lantern, to be used

only on a particular emergency ; and we cared not for man or devil, only Wee Watty.

“ The night was drizzly wet, and as dark as pitch ; the inhabitants of the village were wrapped in sleep ; at least, we saw nothing as we passed through to indicate the contrary. There was only a light to be seen in two places, one was in a chamber, where a child lay dying, as we afterwards learned, and the other was at a small public house, the sign of the Salmon, where two or three of the greatest tipplers of the village were occupied on an argument on religion. Every thing appeared favourable and quiet ; and the silence of the churchyard, when we entered, and all around us, was truly the silence of the grave.

“ Well, to work we went in good spirits, for we soon found the desired spot ; and so secure were we from interruption, that we allowed the man that we had appointed to keep a look out (his name was Bob Pattison, and his anatomical enthusiasm extended to the very work that we were now about,) to take a hand with us in getting up our prize. We sat on a tombstone while we made

our arrangements, so as to save time whenever we might get our *subject* properly sacked, and to enable us to escape speedily, if any thing should happen; but as there did not appear any cause for this fear, we took a drop of brandy, and laying aside our coats, began to dig. Nay, so comfortable were we, that Bob Pattison even lighted his cigar at our dark lantern; and you may smile as you please, but three merrier fellows than ourselves never before sat round a grave at midnight.

“ We had just got the loose turf carefully removed from the grave, and had shovelled out a few spades-full of earth, when an unwelcome beam from the watery moon, now just beginning to peep forth, shot an indistinct cloudy gleam between us and the black sky, and disturbed the security of our utter darkness; at the same instant I, who was rather more cautious than my companions, casting my eye by chance towards the road, distinctly saw a figure moving slowly on the outside, until it stopped at the gate of the churchyard.

“ ‘ Heaven preserve us ! we’re watched,’ said I to my companions, after a moment.

“ ‘ Devil may care,’ said Bob Pattison; ‘ if they’ll only give us ten minutes more to get this old fellow up, that’s all I want.’ ”

“ ‘ Silence a moment,’ I said, in a whisper, ‘ until we see what that can be. Our perseverance may be dangerous.’ ”

“ The figure stopped, and seemed to be looking over the gate.

“ ‘ There is only one,’ said Pattison, as the moon-beam darkened into gloom; ‘ carry on, boys!’ —and they set too again.

“ They flung out a few spades-full more earth; and the moon at that moment shining out again, discovered the figure moving, and, to our astonishment, it passed through the little stile, and walked a few steps into the churchyard.

“ ‘ If it be a ghost I’d give a crown to see it,’ said Pattison, as we stooped and secreted ourselves behind a tombstone.

“ ‘ By heaven,’ said I, ‘ it is Wee Watty! I know his shape as he stands between me and the moon; besides, I can see the piece out of the leaf of his hat.’ ”

“ ‘If it is Watty,’ said the other, ‘we had better take care of ourselves; he’ll raise the whole village upon us in five minutes. It must be he, for there is not a man in Govan would venture into the churchyard, at this hour, but himself.’

“The figure, after a few moments, seemed to turn round and move off, and the darkness returning, we heard his feet distinctly on the footway outside.

“A consultation was now held by all of us, as to what we should do; for we knew if Watty gave the alarm, even should we have got our booty up, and all things smoothed, there would be no such thing as passing with it through Govan. We moved instinctively towards the road, after the figure, and for a few moments stood listening. Hearing nothing, two of us returned to the grave, while the third kept watch, and even walked a little way outside into the village.

“We had scarcely got well to work a second time, when our companion came hastily to us, with word that he had just heard a knocking at one or two doors in the village, and had seen a man with a

lantern running up the street. We now considered that we were fairly observed, and that our only plan was to fill up the grave as quickly as we could, to save appearances, and trust to our own courage, and the darkness of the night, for escaping to Glasgow. We were not mistaken. In five or six minutes we heard voices outside, and before the grave was filled up as we found it, lanterns started up at every corner, and we seemed to be completely surrounded.

“ ‘This business is become rather a *grave* one, after all,’ said Pattison, as we crept upon our hands and knees, among the graves, towards the church, among the pillars of which we expected to hide ourselves, until the people of the town, several of whom were now coming in with lanterns and weapons, should disperse.

“ ‘What the devil shall we do?’ said the other, who carried the sack, in great consternation, as we held a momentary council of war behind a buttress of the church.

“ ‘Fly *you* at once,’ said I, to the last speaker, ‘into the next field; you may get off singly by

taking the road if you can; Pattison, I think, ought to manage for himself. As for me, I will take my chance here for a little, until I find an opportunity of bolting by the side of Clyde; meantime, boys, we meet, as soon as we can escape, in the lane above, to take our passage home in the old gig.'

" 'Is the brandy out?' said Pattison, determinedly.

" 'No; there is a tolerable drop still left. But they're coming this way.'

" 'Never mind, give us a tift,' said Pattison, taking the brandy, and drinking heartily. 'Now! I'll fight my way out of this scrape, Wee Watty and all;' and without another word, he darted out in the face of the valiant villagers, while the other sprang across, and was soon successful in getting behind the watchers and so on to the high road.

" 'Here they are! here they are!' shouted the voice of Watty himself, as Pattison darted out like one of Jamie Harvey's rhetorical figures, from among the tombs; and two fellows, in an instant,

sprang upon the forward youth. Pattison had nothing to defend himself with, except the folding handle of the spade, but up it went, and two or three cracks were given and taken in an instant.

“ ‘Gie me a grip o’ the rascal!’ shouted Watty, ‘I’ll do for him!’ and he sprang upon Pattison.

“ ‘Mind your ain affairs, little chap,’ said Pattison, letting his shovel handle drive at Watty; and having succeeded, in the moment, in keeping the whole party at bay, he sprang through the midst of them, and out upon the road, and was off in an instant.

“ I was so amused with this scene, which I witnessed from the station I had taken in a niche of the church, that I quite forgot my own safety, and hardly thought of it until I saw both my companions off. When the roused villagers, including the two drunken men who had been arguing upon religion, found that one of the depredators upon their beloved churchyard had slipped through their fingers, and knowing that there was one more at least, hid somewhere about, they determined to make up for their negligence in losing Pattison,

by their vigilance in securing the remaining offender. Putting themselves, therefore, under the command of Wee Watty, who delighted in an adventure of this kind, they were forthwith disposed of on the roads and about the churchyard, in a way that rendered my getting off towards Glasgow no easy matter.

“To make matters worse, they drew round the church, at the back of which I had planted myself, with their lanthorns, so as to drive me forth; and having nothing left wherewith to defend myself, I was forced out in their sight, darting down on that side where I had taken refuge, towards the Clyde. The villagers set up a shout on seeing me break cover, and in two minutes I was hemmed in, between the Clyde and the churchyard, on the only side by which I could pass up to Glasgow.

“The cautious rascals, with Wee Watty at their head, knowing that they had me completely in their power, unless I went back several miles, or tried to make way through the hedges, and cross the fields in the dark, and that even then I

must have fallen into their hands, as I returned by the main road, drew a rope across the green, between the ferry-house and the Clyde, so as effectually to intercept me; while Wee Watty and another, armed with sticks and lanterns, came downwards to catch hold of me. I had no other way but to creep down among the stones by the water's edge; for the Clyde rolled black and deep beside me; but when, as the searchers drew near, I found that this was the very place where Watty suspected me to be, and that they held up their lanterns, and searched every corner with scrupulous strictness, I was forced, at the risk of my life, to descend cautiously, and seek concealment by immersing myself, or diving under the water. I now began to be really afraid, either of being drowned, or of falling alive into the hands of the incensed villagers, which would have been nearly as bad; for having lost the time for escaping at first, I positively had not now courage to try to fight my way.

“I called to mind the dreadful situation of Baron Trenck, in the fosse of the Castle of Magdeburgh,

as he describes himself, while the night-watch was going its rounds : as I stood, like him, up to my neck in the Clyde, holding by the stones, and struggling with the current ! while the men paced up and down on the bank above me, and held their lanterns nearly over my head, swearing what they would do, if they could find me. The cold and the terror was positively dreadful ! as I swung in the current, and as I shot up my head now and then, to watch the movements of those who searched for me, by the light of their lanterns, which was reflected from the black Clyde rolling past me.

“ At length, I saw their efforts begin to slacken ; the less zealous turned drowsy, and began to sneak off to their beds : and Wee Watty himself seemed to grow weary on his post. I now ventured to climb the bank, and walking forwards under the hedge, as I drew near the pass at the ferry where two or three of them still stood, I felt my courage return, and was strongly tempted to have a spar with Watty, for the annoyance and fright he had given me. However, that would evidently have

been at this moment the height of imprudence, and watching a favourable opportunity, I slipped past in the dark, and got clear up to Glasgow, where my companions had arrived long before with the gig; having given me up, and left me to shift for myself."

"Well," said I, "when the surgeon had ended so far this tale of his youthful pranks, "you richly deserved all you met with, for going upon such blackguard expeditions; and I hope your fright, and your ducking in the Clyde, effectually cooled your courage for such exploits."

"It did for a time," replied my friend; "but we were so laughed at by the other students, for our unsuccessful attempt, and so much ashamed altogether of the business, added to which, I was so inveterate against Wee Watty, that I was determined to have a trial for it once more; and, if possible, a rap at him the very first good opportunity: and an opportunity did at length offer to us.

"It was now the middle of winter, and a hard frost had bound up the Clyde, so that it would

bear skaiters and players on the ice, almost the whole way from the Broomielaw of Glasgow to Govan. One day, Pattison and myself set off to reconnoitre what we could see again in this churchyard ; and were able to go the whole way on the surface of the Clyde, sliding and sporting upon the ice. We had arrived a little below Kelvinhaugh, when our attention was attracted by a numerous party of curlers, who were busy in their healthful sport. We had just got among them, and stood near one end of the space near the mark or T at which their curling stones were aimed ; when, in looking up towards the further end, we saw a stone thrown off, and in a moment, a little man came racing up beside it, with the sporting broom in his hand ; and before we had time to notice who it was, a dozen voices shouted, ‘ That’s the thing, Watty ! gi’e’ it the besom !—soop it up !—soop it up !—well done, Watty !’—and instantly the stone came hurling past us ; and Wee Watty himself sweeping it with all his might, amidst the cheers of the curlers.

“ Devil’s in this Watty !” said I to Pattison ;

‘ for he is every where, and every body’s favorite ! I see we shall have no luck to-day ; and we scarcely need go farther.’ This was literally the case ; for, on going to the churchyard, every thing lay warm under the snow, and not a creature seemed to have been buried for a considerable time : so we returned to the ice, to watch Watty and the curlers.

“ ‘ That body is taking too much exercise ; he’ll overheat himself dangerously,’ said I to Pattison, as we amused ourselves looking at Watty running in all directions and ‘ *sooping it up* !’

“ ‘ It would take a devilish deal to kill Watty :’ was Pattison’s answer : and so we returned to Glasgow in the evening, no better than we had left it.

“ Well, it came a thaw sometime after this, and word was brought us, by some of our young friends, who had an eye on the churchyards, that there was a very tempting new-made grave, just covered up, in the Govan burying ground ; and, in order to retrieve our lost honours, we determined to make another attack upon it. There was no

person except Pattison and myself that could go, so we kept our plan entirely to ourselves, for fear of another defeat, and took neither gig nor other conveyance, in order that we might avoid exposure, even before our friends. We also resolved, as the nights were long, to avoid the hazard of encountering Watty, by not setting off until three or four in the morning.

“ On the appointed night, all things being ready, we rose at three; took our sack and implements, and our bottle of brandy, full to the cork, and off we set, on a cold sleety morning, feeling sure of success. There never was any thing more neatly and cleanly effected than the way in which we got to our ground. We walked in the churchyard as secure as if we had been in the cloisters of Glasgow College; and we found the earth as soft as if we had been digging in a flower-pot. Then, Sir, we got the dead one up so pleasant and comfortable, that I was quite in love with him; and he went into the sack, I declare, just as if he had known his duty, and wished to make himself quite agreeable.

“ Well, Sir,—when we had filled up the grave, and laid on the turf again, as smooth and beautiful as a swansdown tippet, we just placed our prize by the wall, and sat down on a stone, to make ourselves happy, with a considerable pull at the brandy bottle. Cheese and bread we had too, Sir ; and there we were, in a delicious churchyard, with our valuable silent friend by our side, as happy as kings, and as merry as grigs, when—confound the thing ! a great ill looking blacksmith, that lived opposite, quite disturbed and disconcerted our happiness.

“ The coarse black rascal had, it appears, been at some wedding, or other spree, somewhere about Mr. Oswald’s, of Shieldhall, and was coming home with some of his drunken friends, when his eye caught a glimpse from our dark lantern, by the light of which we were incautiously enjoying our refreshment.

“ ‘ I’ll be hanged,’ said the man, as he looked over the gate, ‘ if thae doctors are not a-foot ! I saw a peep o’ light just beyond Mrs. Mair’s monument this very instant.’

“ ‘Hoot, man, ye’re fou!’ said his companion, ‘ye see double; it’s only spunkie.’

“ ‘Deevil a spunkie,’ said the smith; ‘I saw it as clear as the smiddy fire. Never trust me, but I’ll be at the bottom o’t;’ and he at once rushed into the churchyard.

“ ‘Here’s another unlucky business;’ said I, taking up the sack and its contents, and making off towards the other open stile of the churchyard.

“ But the smith was neither blind nor deaf, and both saw and heard us making our retreat in the dark; and the fellow, seeming to have become more acute from the drink he had taken, at once made for the opposite passage out, to cut off our retreat; so we were obliged to betake ourselves, with our charge, to our old quarters, at the back of the church.

“ ‘Cheer up, old fellow!’ said Pattison, clapping heartily the shoulder of our stiff friend in the sack; ‘there’s nothing to oppose us but a drunken blacksmith as yet; and if we can only keep out of the way of Wee Watty, we’ll get up to Glasgow immediately, all three, like gentlemen.’

“ I don’t know whether it was the brandy, or whether it was that we had our *subject* so properly set beside us, that made us feel so happy; but, although we had to wait a good while under the church, we still expected to come off victorious. The morning, however, had now so far advanced, that we began to feel uneasy, as we continued to stand in the nook of a buttress of the old Govan church, listening to the Clyde, roaring beneath us, as the increasing waters of the thaw cracked and heaved up the icy surface. But we perceived that the smith and his cronies had grown tired of watching for us, and had no lanterns; and, as there was not the least indication of Wee Watty yet stirring to assist them, we got up our quiet friend in the sack, and, placing him on the back of Pattison, came cautiously out towards the side of the river.

“ We were now at as great a loss as ever what to do; for our charge was so precious from all the dangers we had braved for it, that we feared to risk leaving it any where until we should return with the gig, which we should not now be able to

do before daylight ; and, as to carrying it through the village, or up by the side of the water, towards Glasgow, on our backs, that was impossible ; for the working people were already stirring ; besides, the smith we feared was not yet *laid*. What in the world were we to do ? There seemed no other way but to try to escape across the Clyde, with our charge, upon the ice, although the thaw had almost broken it up ; the water was now flooding down upon its surface, and the attempt seemed perilous in the extreme. However, what with the brandy we had taken, and what with our joy, at having captured our prize, we soon determined to risk it ; and we and our ‘ corpy ’ forthwith launched upon the swimming ice of the Clyde.

“ We had not gone three steps before the creaking of the ice under us, from bank to bank, was positively appalling. Notwithstanding this, splash we went on, dragging our dead friend after us, while the ice gave way with us at every few steps ; until, missing our way, owing to the darkness and in our anxiety, and swerving downwards towards the mouth of Kelvine, down went Pattison

through the ice, and was up to his neck in a moment.

“ ‘ Hold on by the body, for mercy’s sake !’ he shouted out to me ; and, fortunately, I held firm by our *subject*, and so did he, although my heart went thump against my side, with the apprehension, every moment, of going down myself. However, the dead body actually saved Pattison’s life ; for I dragged by it, while he held on at the opposite end of the sack, until I pulled him out : thus, struggling and splashing over breaking ice, we worked on, until we got firm footing on the surface of Kelvine : and, as the devil’s bairns will have the devil’s luck, at length all of us, dead and alive, got, like Jonah, safe to dry land. We did not desert our dead friend until we got him comfortably deposited in the outhouse of an acquaintance, on whom we could depend, near the village of Partick, and then returned, wet and fatigued, to Glasgow.

“ We ought to have gone and taken some rest after this perilous night ; but we were so proud of our prize, and so anxious to see what sort of bargain it might turn out to be, after all our

trouble, and the hazard we had run, that we determined to get out the gig, and return to Partick immediately, for our valuable deposit. Without any delay we at once got into the vehicle; and, proceeding back, placed our sack and its contents safely under our feet, in the gig, and home we went, with flying colours, to Glasgow.

“ By the time we returned, the whole of our associates were assembled, about or in the lecture room, to see what sort of a subject we had obtained at last; and, I confess, I myself was as anxious as any one could well be, to know who it was that had been our companion through so many troubles. *In* came the body, and *off* went the sack over his head, like the changing of a shirt. ‘ What are you staring at?’ said the operator, as Pattison and I gazed, in mute astonishment, when the countenance was exposed, and the eyes of the dead man, still half open, seemed to stare upon *us*.

“ ‘ By heavens!’ exclaimed Pattison, who was first able to speak, ‘ it’s Watty!’

“ ‘ It *is* Watty himself! by all that’s amazing;’

said I. ‘ For mercy’s sake, gentlemen, close his eyes, that he may not see us ; and tie him to the table, or he’ll be sure to get up, and run off.’

“ It was, indeed, the real Wee Watty at last ; who, having caught an inflammation, by over-exertion, among the curlers, had died suddenly, and fell at last, into the hands of those very doctors whom he had so often successfully defeated.

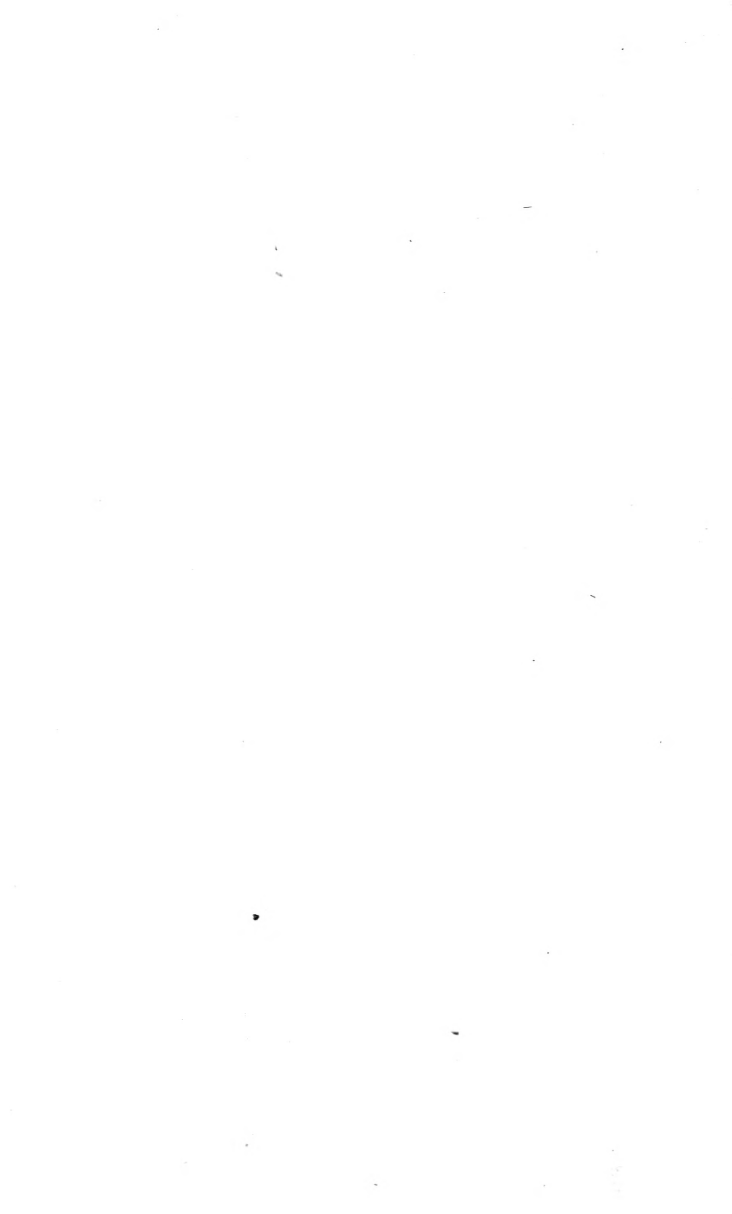
“ Ha, ha ! a pleasant story enough,” said I, “ but somewhat coarse, like yourself, doctor.”

“ Hold your tongue, Dominie,” said he, “ every body is not like you ; and it’s an excellent story for a change : and as to what you call coarseness, I refer you to some of the first periodicals of the day, who ——”

“ Hush !—but is there any more ?”

“ Only that I shall never forget the jubilee, we of the anatomy class, held upon the occasion, nor the everlasting credit and fame which yet attaches to us, for having, at last, got hold of such a valuable subject as Wee Watty.”

MY MARRIED LIFE.



MY MARRIED LIFE.

A CONFESSION.

O, long I look'd forward to my bridal day,
And fond were my hopes, and my wishes they were rife ;
But many anxious cares and many bitter woes
Have dull'd the weary years of my wedded life.

Scrap Stanzas.

ON a summer's afternoon, I had taken my walk upwards and along the ridge of the hill, called the Hut, on which is now built part of the town of Paisley, in Scotland. On the farther ridge of the hill, is a circular level plot of rich grass, which, for many years, has been inclosed as a bowling-green, and which, standing in a most delightful situation, serves the homely men of the town, who can afford to enjoy a little after-dinner idleness, for the healthful and pleasant pastime of bowling.

This bowling-green is surrounded by a double

row of trees, and, outside of all, there is a walk round it; and this walk, which, in my early days, was not built up nor inclosed towards the plain below, by the selfish jealousy of ownership, commanded a most extensive and interesting prospect. There was merely a low hedge on the outer side, which skirted the green field that sloped down the back of the hill, and the gate of this field itself was frequently left open, even in the seducing evenings of summer; so that in those days a musing idler, like myself, might wander in, and walking on the soft grass, look out on the wide prospect beneath him, without ever being challenged for it.

The gate of the descending field was ajar this afternoon, and without ceremony I slipped in, and sat myself down on an eminence on the hill side, to enjoy the view, and basked myself sunward in all the comfort of contemplative carelessness and an easy mind. The great plain below me (at that time called the Moss, and only cultivated in patches,) stretched far towards Greenock, and terminated in the irregular blue hills of Argyle-

shire ; the Kilpatrick Braes swept down into the vale of Clyde on the right, and among the objects in the plain eastward, the old fashioned steeple, from the centre of the ancient town of Renfrew, shot up among the silvery windings of the river Cart in the distance, helping out my picturesque fancies and classical recollections of the West of Scotland.

I had sat for some time basking in the sun, and gazing at my ease upon the pleasing objects in the plain, when I heard a low and stifled sobbing behind me. I looked cautiously round, and perceived part of the figure of a young but somewhat matronly dressed female, sitting on the brae under the hedge and beyond a bush at a little distance, who was weeping and shaking her head, as she held her handkerchief to her eyes, in all the agony of mental sorrow. I did not take any notice, from a fear of disturbing the woman in her grief, but continued to gaze from me towards the Blackston Moss below, giving, however, an occasional glance to watch the female, from a natural and increasing curiosity.

She wept so sincerely, and so bitterly, that my

heart was sad for the poor thing, and I wondered what circumstance, or event it could be, that had thus involved her in solitary distress. But still I sat with my back towards her, enjoying the prospect, and seeming not to hear her sobbing and gushing sorrow. Alas! thought I, how often in this world are we obliged to turn our backs upon the distresses of others, and affect not to hear or see what we cannot relieve or alleviate. It will do her good, I said, to weep awhile. There is consolation to sorrow even in that.

As I sat, my mind occupied partly with the placid objects in the plain, and partly with reflections regarding the woman's solitary sorrow, I saw that her fit of grief was passing over, for she began to look upon the outstretched plain and the green grass around her, and down upon the dark firs of Blackston Wood, and then towards where I sat. Her eyes were red and swollen, yet her face interested me much, and her person was exceedingly neat. She saw me looking at her, but she did not avoid me. Without any apology, I rose up, stepped forward, and quietly and *cannily* sat myself down beside her.

The lady,—I speak gallantly,—looked at me.

I looked at the lady.

There must surely be something after all in people's looks !

“ You will excuse me, Madam,” I said, while she seemed to wonder at me.

“ Yes, Sir,” she said, abstractedly, and wiping her eyes.

“ You seem to have been occupied with sad thoughts.”

“ Yes, Sir,—sad thoughts.”

“ God help us ! there are many sad things in the world.”

“ Yes, Sir, many !” and she put her handkerchief again to her face.

“ I'll not disturb you in your sorrow, Madam. I'll leave you, if you request it.”

“ I did not bid you, when you came to sit beside me, a sorrowful woman,” she answered, looking at me through her tears ; “ and I'll not bid you go away.”

“ Very well ; and I'll not run away from one that's in grief.”

The young woman looked at me again, gratefully, and almost smiled.

“Now what may you be breaking your heart about, Mistress?” I said, after a while, somewhat familiarly.

“I am just relieving my heart, Sir, wi’ a greet over my married life.”

“Then you are married?”

“Yes, Sir!”—and she shook her head, and covered her eyes again.

“Crying over your married life!—that is different from what you once expected, I dare say.”

“Very different, Sir.”

“But something may be wrong, which it may not be too late to rectify. The sores of circumstances, and the cankers of uncongenial temper, may sometimes be healed, if one knew—”

She shook her head thoughtfully, and then said, “Besides, Sir, you and I are strangers.”

“So we are, Madam; but there are often strangers to us that it would be a great advantage to know better. At all events, a stranger has no interest in giving you advice mixed with selfish

views. He only knows you as an interesting person, and it can give him no pleasure to see you unhappy."

"You speak kindly, Sir, to a poor friendless woman! and, I suppose, I may talk to you: for you see, Sir, my heart was full; and I had no one at home that sympathized with me: and so I just came here to take my greet to myself on this hill side."

"Poor woman!"

A little more colloquy between us, induced the lady,—for there are some people who are gentry by their looks and feelings, whatever may be their situation in life,—to impart to me a good deal of her confidence; and by degrees, she began to tell me the particulars of those circumstances in her history by which she was now so deeply affected.

"I am surely, Sir," she said, "a very unfortunate woman; at least, I may call myself so, when I look back on the past, and think that now my situation is fixed, probably for life. I cannot even say, if I call to mind my early days, that I was happy when I was a girl, and before I engaged with worldly

cares; for my father's house was comfortless and melancholy. He was a widower, a dull broken down dispirited man. We had no mother since I was quite a child, to cheer the house, and guide my youth. I had not even a sister for a playmate, or companion, as I grew to womanhood; and lingering out tedious years, my thoughts rested in the future; and all my anticipations of earth's happiness, referred to the time that was yet to be, and dwelt with fond complacency upon what I promised myself in my married life.

“I wish I could make you understand, Sir,” she continued, “the character of my father, and how much I depended upon him for what little happiness I tasted in my early years. His affection for me, expression cannot reach the description of! his nervous solicitude for my happiness, a doting father can alone conceive. He discouraged the train of thought that I mention, when he could detect it; and often warned me against placing my happiness in times which I might never see! and in circumstances of the undeveloped future, wherein there was generally found such difference

between the reality when it came, and the previous paintings of a youthful imagination ! But my father was a man of sadness and disappointments ; and as he was then growing old, it was natural that he should speak gloomily about things ; and that I should think him more in the wrong than he really was. I listened to his words, however, with the deepest reverence. I looked up in his mildly melancholy countenance with unspeakable affection, and shed tears at the deliberate solemnity of his oracular warnings ; but still I thought, if there were other men in the world as worthy in heart as himself, a union with one such would be true happiness ; and that happiness I still hoped would yet be my lot, in my married life !”

“Doubtless,” said I, as the lady paused ; “and yet hope is a fine thing, if we could use it in moderation.”

“I do not think, Sir, that in this I am particularly singular ; for if women would confess, as I now am doing to you,” continued the lady, “I suppose that, happy or not in their parental home, they would be found still to look forward to, and

meditate upon, according to the depth of their feelings—the joys or griefs, the elevations or degradations reserved for them when they come to a married life. At all events the solitude in which I spent my youth directed my thoughts much to days to come; and, conformably to the ends of female education, I always looked forward to my marriage as the beginning of a new existence, and the scene of every pleasure that is grateful to the imagination of a woman.”

“Imagination again,” I said; “no wonder, Madam, you are now sitting here bemoaning your situation on a hill side.”

“Probably this feeling was strengthened,” she resumed, “by my witnessing the happiness of one of my young companions, the only one with whom I ever had an opportunity of being very intimate. She was older than myself, and besides being an occasional companion, she was like a mother to me, until marriage deprived me of the unlimited advantages of her society. I cannot help my imagination, Sir, when fed by what I saw with my eyes, and dwelt upon with the warm rapture of

youth. I was the confidant, in her courtship, of my dear Mary Ann ; I was her bridesmaid, on the happy morning of her marriage ; I participated in the exultation, as I imitated the dress of the triumphant bride. I saw the familiar companion of my youth given away to the man who adored her, amid a circle of smiling relatives. I heard the clergyman pronounce her and the bridegroom married persons, and invoke Heaven for a rich blessing upon them and their descendants. They *were* happy—they *are* happy, singularly so ! Alas ! for me—”

“ Pray go on, my sorrowful lady, I wait for you.”

“ I saw my dear companion become a mother and a matron ; I attended the christening and the churching feasts in her house, wherein was gathered a circle of delighted relatives. I played with her cherub children, and witnessed her performing the interesting duties of a happy mother, while I was almost caressed for her sake, by her doting husband ; and my eyes would stream with tears of rapture, as I used to figure to myself the pleasures I was likely to taste in my own wedded life.

“ But surely, Sir,” continued the little woman, weeping again, “ in our adventures for happiness in this world, we look at the prizes without taking account of the blanks, and without qualifying our expectations from the uncertain future, and so lay up for ourselves needless disappointment. I know, at least, that I have had a very different lot from that of my fortunate companion ; and many are the unhappy blanks that I have since seen in the often blind adventure of matrimony.”

“ Very likely, Madam,” I said ; “ but I will make reflections for myself, if you will just be so good as to proceed with your story.”

“ Strange, I think, has been my lot, Sir, as you shall hear ; for I once had a lover who did indeed adore me, as much as my companion’s lover and husband doted upon her, and who sought after me many a day, and watched my every movement, and regarded my very footsteps with modest and retiring admiration. My father himself respected the young man highly ; and when that dear parent died, George Blair was the first to show an anxiety for my consolation after my loss, and concerning

my future happiness. But the youth was constitutionally modest; and while he hung back, from the conscious humility of a narrow fortune, and an honourable mind, he seemed to think marriage for him was, for a long time to come, out of the question, and that a union with me was what he could only wish for, while he scarcely dared at present to give expression to his wishes.

“ I now look back, with a sad pleasure and a self-accusing regret, upon the interesting days which this youth and I passed in quiet and hopeful intimacy. I then kept the house of my elder brother, who was a bachelor, and here George often came: we talked together, sometimes with gaiety, but oftener with a plaintive seriousness, in the long nights of winter, without feeling weary; we went to church together like brother and sister; we walked together on the sabbath evenings, for we were not ashamed; we climbed the Paisley braes together, and picked blaeberrries on Gleniffer, or listened to the whistle of the blackbird echoing through the bonnie woods of Hawkhead: at night we sung psalms together, with my serious

brother, before our frugal supper, and we parted at bed time in confidential affection, soberness, and peace.

“ We talked, during our long rambles, on the subject of religion; we talked of ministers who comforted the hearts of the afflicted on earth, and lighted the way to heaven; we talked of martyrs who had perished for the truth in former days, as we read the inscription upon their tombstone, where they lie buried in the Broomlands of Paisley; we talked of nature, as we wandered by the edge of the Cart, and smelt the sweetbriar at evening fa’; we talked of Providence and its riches, as the corn fields grew ripe and yellow in harvest; we talked even of love, as we listened to the cooing of the cushat, which we distinctly heard from the pleasant plantations of bonnie Greenlaw. We seldom, however, spoke of marriage, for it was a subject which George Blair seemed afraid to mention; and he only hinted at it, as we do concerning those mansions of bliss in another state into which we hope one day to be admitted.

“ How strangely events turn out! All this time

we never dreamed but that we were, at some period, to be married; even my brother regarded George Blair as almost one of the family; and no one else, in the shape of a suitor, ever thought now of looking after one whose fortune seemed already fixed. But I thought it strange that George did not speak of marriage; and was, indeed, often silent and sad. I observed, sometimes, that a dark cloud seemed to come over his countenance as he looked at me, and strange expressions often dropped from him about going abroad to seek his fortune. His practice, as a surgeon, was limited and unimproving; and he seemed to examine me, as to my notions of style of living, with a nervous and sensitive solicitude. I remember, on one occasion (but I was not in earnest, I'm sure I meant nothing but a thoughtless expression of girlish ambition, which should never have stood in the way of union with the man of my dearest choice), that we were speaking of the circumstances under which some of our acquaintances had married, and began the world. I believe I spoke slightly, perhaps, contemptuously, of these circum-

stances, and, probably, talked high of what I should expect, in *my* married life."

"Just so," said I, shaking my head as she paused; "very likely."

"I spoke, as I said, in the mere wantonness of girlish emulation, and female desire for some external show; but I was then a young girl; nor did I speak but as a thoughtless woman, who will utter thoughtless wishes, and forget them like a passing breath. Alas! I did not then consider that this is a tender subject, and galling to men of sensibility and pride, who are full of wishes and high aims; yet, in respect of their desires, on account of the female they love, are comparatively and consciously poor. George took no notice at the time, but he gradually and perceptibly withdrew himself from my acquaintance.

"He did not do this, however, without hints which I was too dull or too confident to take; and intimations which, at the time, gave me little alarm. Even his protracted absence scarcely alarmed my pride, as I thought of the quarrels of lovers; yet I had too much of this pride to take

any notice of this strange and but half explained desertion. Alas ! what creatures we are, and how much the best of us are affected by mere circumstances of external fortune. I am now conscious, when I look back, that his poverty, which he exaggerated, for fear of future evils, arising from my high notions, while it awakened compassion for him and lamentations over his perfect worth, must have been mixed with the natural contempt which our educations and prejudices associate with such circumstances, or I would not have received his communications with the unimpressive confidence which I did. He said to myself, and in particular to my brother, words which amounted to an idea that, happy as we had been in our long and interesting acquaintance, we should never be man and wife ; and yet I looked upon this as only his modest and plaintive mode of talking ; for I thought that he would again return to me, from the power I had over him ; and I still made myself happy in the anticipations of my married life.

His absence, however, was so long, that I became uneasy and melancholy ; while strange whis-

pers were brought to me concerning him and another female, with whom I knew him to be acquainted. The news of his *marriage*, however, came upon me like a burst of thunder, which changes the aspect of nature, and turns the finest day in summer to blackness and desolation. All was now changed with me ! all my prospects of happiness with George Blair had vanished ! I need not tell you, Sir, about a woman's grief : but I was not able to leave my room for more than six weeks."

The little lady paused here so long that I was obliged to encourage her to proceed, by assuring her I was not in the least tired of her story ; and, moreover, I took the liberty of saying, "Madam, you need not take it so very much to heart, for I know it for a fact, that somehow very few women get exactly the man they love for their husband."

"I believe that is very true, Sir," said the lady, wiping her eyes, and taking comfort from this consolatory statement ; "and I began to think so myself, after I recovered, and could reason calmly upon my disappointment : but I had a long and

dreary time of it for many months ; for my brother's business had taken him abroad, and I was left nearly alone in the house, and it was winter. Sad were my tedious nights in the dark part of the year ! and, indeed, my mind had, I believe, taken a somewhat melancholy turn, and had become even superstitious. I remember at that time having an idea that I had not long to live ; and that I was soon to follow my melancholy father to the grave. I began even to attend to my dreams, and to be affected by nervous prognostics of mortality. The winter winds seemed to shake the house and my frame together ; and their long howl over my head, as I lay sleepless on my pillow, considering my latter end, and counting the watches of the night, gave me a sad and ominous pleasure.

“ But spring at length shed its sunny influence over this broad plain beneath us ; and the green braird began to sprout up, rich and lively, over the black moss ; and then my brother came home, and he brought, now and then, a little company to enliven the house in which I had passed

my lonely winter. Among other persons of my brother's acquaintance, was a pleasant talking middle-aged man, with whom he had business; a shrewd, lively, jolly person, who was generally well received wherever he went, because he was good company. Mr. Jamieson's society took my brother's fancy, because it was amusing, and he brought him frequently to our house. I also began to be pleased to see him, because he enlivened us, and his company was a relief from the serious dulness so uniform in my home. Mr. Jamieson had been once married; his wife was dead, and to my surprise, at first, he began to pay some attentions to me, and to try to be particularly agreeable when I was present.

“I received these attentions, in the first instance, with alarm, when I looked at this man and considered that he was a widower with several children: then I thought of the partner I had pictured to myself, and the happiness I had anticipated for my married life; but as he was a man who could talk very sensibly about all matters, and make himself very generally agreeable, I began

to get used to his visits, and even to like his company. As his attentions, however, became more marked, I felt a sort of terror at the contemplation of entering into the house of a widower, of undertaking the management of another woman's children, and living with a man who, although he might have a deal of worldly sense, yet was neither like me in years, nor could sympathize with me in my sensibility of mind.

“ Then again I reflected, that I was now above twenty-six,—that my fortune, in respect of marriage, was broken,—that my circumstances were peculiar,—and that it was the lot of poor females to be very much at the mercy of others, in the hopes and chances of their wedded life! As I continued to think in this strain, I traced many good points in Mr. Jamieson's character: I had a deference for his judgment and his experience; and took even his ridicule of my sensitiveness and seriousness in good part. Even in this difference of disposition, I thought I could perceive the materials of domestic happiness; and began to be convinced, by his sneering remarks, that many things

that I regarded as evils, or that affected me, might very well be turned into a joke. In short, I was taken with his manner, and the gay novelty of his remarks ; and persuading myself that I began to love him, my spirits again rallied ; and as his attentions increased, I still indulged pleasing expectations and good hopes from my married life !

“ Well, Sir, we *were* married ; but so many delays and cross incidents had taken place in the interim, that the great event to which I had looked forward for so many years, came but as the termination of many vexations ; so that the heart was by this time sick, and the mind unhinged ; and it came also but as the inauspicious commencement of a state of life which I had taken on myself for better or for worse ; and was already suspended on extremely doubtful circumstances. Even my weddingday was unlike any other weddingday that I had ever seen. It was not even like an April day, showers relieved by sunshine,—smiles alternating with tears. It was a day of nothing but harshness and gloom, ‘ vapours, and clouds, and storms.’

“The very banquet that my husband had prepared for our wedding dinner, and the entertainments of the evening, were ominously disastrous. The meat was spoiled from ignorant interference with the cook; my husband was put out of humour by this and the non-appearance of guests, upon whom he depended, both for the wit they could bring with them, and for giving him opportunity of showing his own; and we sat down to it late, on the rainy evening of my wedding day, as if we had all met with some strange disappointment. In addition to this, my own young friends, who were all scattered abroad and married, were none of them present, and my husband’s friends were mostly elderly persons, dull and morose, who seemed to look upon my husband’s youthful marriage as weak and imprudent; and some of them scowled upon me as an unfitting intruder. But the worst was yet to come, for just as the wine began to warm the cold hearts of the men, and to loose the tongues and smooth the jealousy of the women, my husband found himself ill and was obliged to retire to bed, from a consti-

tutional complaint; and I was left to my own reflections for the remainder of the evening, and subject to the rude jokes of the men, about the unseasonable illness of the bridegroom upon his wedding night.

“Thus passed my disastrous and disheartening bridal day, and thus commenced my long anticipated married life. I soon found into what sort of circumstances I had brought myself; and now saw, when too late, what I was to expect in that long wished for house of my own, of which I was now the mistress. Instead of being the happy and caressed wife of a fond young man, as I had always looked forward to one day becoming, my hands were immediately filled with household matters, and my mind harassed with the thankless duties of matron over another woman’s children. Even what is usually called the honey-moon, was spent by me in little else but getting into order the ill regulated house of a widower, whose children I saw, too plainly, would prove the source of endless toil, and ultimately, perhaps, of painful disagreement.

“I need not trouble you, Sir,” continued the

little woman, “with the unamusing particulars of an unhappy marriage. But as the time drew nigh that I was to become a mother, I felt, amidst my toils and cares, that I loved my husband; and as nature’s weakness came over my heart, I looked for something like tenderness in return; at least I yearned for some of those soothing sympathies and tokens of regard, which, in this time of trial, are so consoling to the heart of a woman. But, alas! my feelings were only sent back upon myself, to choke in my own bosom; and I now felt, with bitter regret, that I had not married a young man. If my husband ever had been capable of loving, he had bestowed it all upon his first wife, on whose children now was lavished both his care and his affection; whilst I, sad at heart, and anxious in mind, was looked upon in the simple light of a household convenience and a domestic drudge.”

“And does your husband really not love you, Madam?” said I: “surely he cannot but—”

“Sometimes I almost think he does, Sir,” she

said; "and then I am so grateful to him for the least kindness, that I could endure any thing for his sake; but, alas! if he did not even insult me often, and try to break my spirit or my heart, I would almost feel thankful and happy."

"A sad situation, indeed," I said, observing the simple good sense and feeling of the woman, "when it happens to such as you."

"In general," she continued, after another pause, "I toil away amidst his family and my own, now also increasing; while he spends his evenings away from me; for you see, Sir, every one has their lot, and this is mine: but when he quarrels with me about his first wife's mischievous and unmanageable children, and unfeelingly throws her in my teeth, as he did to-day, and insults me harshly, and wounds my feelings, then my mind gets unhinged and my heart is filled with sorrow; and throwing my cloak around me, I run out of the house to this spot, where George Blair and I used so often to linger in the long nights of summer; and here I sit and think of him and of

former days, and past hopes, and greet to myself while I say, ‘and is it this state of weary toil and anxiety that is, after all, to be *my married life.*’ ”

“ Poor woman ! ”

What else could I do when she had poured forth her grief, but advise her to return to her house and hope for happier days, and just to take courage and try the world again ; “ and doubt not,” said I, “ but that, sad as your case may be, comfort will come from a quarter whence you little expect it ; for I have seen in my day, that in this world, good and evil, like the figures in a dance, do very often change places.”

“ God bless you, Sir ! ” said the woman, looking round at me, and then rising. “ You and I are mere strangers ; and yet I have opened my mind to you as I never could do to my own husband, nor did he ever speak to me half so kindly and comforting.”

“ That often happens,” I said, musingly ; and something more that I added, seemed again to

affect the poor lady's feelings, for merely pressing my hand, gratefully, she drew her little cloak around her, and turning her back, parted from me without saying another word.

THE HIGHLAND OFFICER.

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CHAPTER I.

Wander you wide the earth, 'mongst high and low,
Or watch and scan the tides of public haunt—
Sometimes you'll dwell on forms so exquisite,
And hear of hearts so thrall'd and knit in love,
'That mem'ry lingers fondly o'er the tale.

Scrap Stanzas.

I WONDER what in the world it was that took me so far to the north, as I went the summer that I am now thinking of. But so it happened, that travelling on in my daikering dawdling way, I never once thought about any thing, but forward, forward I went, until I thought I was at the very world's end, for I was actually stopped short by the gruesome look of the black hills of Sutherlandshire, in the north Highlands.

However, here I did face about at last, to return back towards Balgownie Brae, if ever I should be

destined to see my own far off home again: for, to be very plain with the reader, my siller was now getting miserably scant, in my roomy pockets; the few spare garments in my wallet were in a sorely unthrifty condition, and my shoes had given me *open* intimation, that so far from lasting me out the campaign, they were determined not to carry me decently a league further. Besides this, I found that my stock of languages was actually quite run out, here in the north; for I might as well never have paid a shilling for my learning, it being of not the least use to offer to talk Latin or Greek to a highland wife on my road; and as for plain English, they no more understood it than I did their filthy goghelty-gaughelty Gaelic.

Well, towards home I returned, at length, as I before said; and having risen early one fine summer's morning, arrived betimes at the pleasant town of Inverness, meaning to pass directly through it, keeping straight on, in my line of march to the southward, and taking advantage of any offered conveyance that might carry me through the lonesome Moor of Culloden in the neighbourhood.

But I had scarcely entered the romantic highland capital, before I began to see symptoms of some strange commotion. Every body seemed agog with some present affair: most of the people were running towards the Cross, particularly the women, who seemed perfectly out of their wits about something that was going forward; but well pleased was I to see, that whatever it was that had thus set the highland people agait, the thing was evidently of a joyful nature. As soon as I got to the Talbooth and the corner of the Cross, I saw what all this running through the streets, this universal chattering of the women and bewitching of the servant maids was about. It was the arrival, after many years' absence, of the ——— regiment, let me call them the thirty-second Highlanders, which had come into the town on the evening before, and were now paraded, after their night's refreshment, at the Cross, and along the High Street opposite the Town Hall.

“Bless me!” said I to myself, “what a piece of work is here,” for I actually could not get through for the crowd assembled to look at the dear Celtic

soldiers; and even the windows round the Cross were filled with highland ladies, and lowland ladies, and pretty faces of all sorts, to get a look at the fine men, and the resistless officers of the newly arrived regiment. I pushed my way on amongst the crowd, and on to the parapet, called the plain stones, for the sight was quite exciting, even to me; and when I saw the long line of kilted infantry, and the commander galloping about and giving them the word; and when the warlike sound of the drums and fifes, at the extremities of the line, echoed from the surrounding houses, and the band next struck up, and filled the place with martial music, I could not help being infected with the enthusiasm of the crowd, and lingered amongst it, like a boy, to see the sight.

I had not stood more than five minutes among the stirring multitude before I got so interested, that, hitching up my wallet under my arm, I determined to play truant to my previous intentions; for a single glance or two along the line showed me the inward feelings of the poor fellows, now

returned among their friends, as completely as if I had known them all their lives. Their very commander gave them the word, I thought, in a tone of kindly authority, as if they had been his children; while they watched him with their eyes, and performed their evolutions with the proud alacrity of the attached Highlander to his chief, whom they almost held in adoration. But that was not all; for it was evident, even from the very tunes that were played by the band, as well as by the looks of the men towards the crowd and up to the windows, that "bonnie Inverness" had been the point of their longings for years before; for there was scarcely a man of them who had not relatives, wives, or sweethearts, in or near the place, and they were all on the spot this blessed morning, each to see their own, on parade.

This was the reason why the greater portion of the crowd were females; and when the band sounded forth the air of Highland Harry, every beat of which reminded the crowd of the words so anxiously calling back the beloved Gordon,

O, for him back again,
O, for him back again.
I would gie all Knockhespie lands
For Highland Harry back again.

As if exulting in the feelings that their return had created, I observed the glances that were exchanged, and many of the girls beating time by clapping their hands to the music; but when the tune afterwards reminded them of the words,

Weel could *I* my true love ken,
Among ten thousand Highlandmen.

I saw several of the poor Highland girls actually crying with joy, as each looked distinguishingly towards their own, among the sun-burnt, but joyful faces, in the long rank of soldiers before them.

Shortly the officers, as usual, after the regiment had performed the ceremony of presenting arms, stepped out from the ranks to the right and left, and crowded round their colonel, to the great gratification of the numerous female faces who gazed eagerly from the windows above to get a sight of them. I observed that two or three of the captains were stately weather-beaten veterans, of a

good age; but the majority of the whole officers were young men, having all the proud bearing belonging to family and chieftainship—the confidence and high spirit of youth, with the careless consciousness of the admiration of the fair. But I thought nothing about them as yet, for I was beginning at the moment to consider if it was not now time to pursue my journey; when, as they separated to return to the ranks, my eyes rested upon a young fellow as he stepped proudly past me, whose face struck me at once as being so peculiarly interesting and noble, that this Highland youth completely riveted and carried away my attention to himself for the remainder of the morning, and was the cause of entirely changing my movements for some time, as I am about to relate.

I had always a foolish admiration for beauty both in man and woman, and positively could not help watching every motion of this handsome officer in the remaining movements of the regiment, until I became completely interested to learn who he was, or something of his family and character. I saw

that hundreds of eyes were watching him as well as my own, for it was impossible not to be struck with his peculiarly fine Highland countenance, and his elegant youthful form, and this increased my interest in him.

“ I’ll be sworn,” said I, within myself, “ that there is some affair connected with this young man, that is remarkable ; for it is impossible that such a fellow can be out of a love-affair at this very moment. He cannot possibly have been able to keep himself out of some scrape among the women, for the very men are in love with him !” and before the regiment was off parade, I determined that I would, by some means or other, be at the bottom of all the known gallantries attached to his history.

Accordingly, as soon as the word *dismiss* was given, and the men were joyfully dispersing themselves among their waiting friends, I mixed myself among the scatterings of the young officer’s company, not doubting but I should meet with some talkative Highlandman, belonging to it, who could give me all the interesting particulars that

could be told of him. I soon fell into the company of a sober-looking man, whose countenance pleased me; and who seeming to be of the few who had no friends in the place to hurry him away, was quite ready to talk to any curious straggler like myself.

“A fine morning for your first parade in the town of Inverness, friend,” said I, condescendingly addressing him.

“It’s a gude wholesome *afternoon*, atweel,” said the man, correcting my time of the day in rather a prejinkity manner, while he cast his eyes critically over my person, and then fixed them rather curiously on my leathern wallet.

I knew what the man was thinking of in a moment by the horologe of his face; and knowing well that the privates of the Highland regiments were all gentlemen, made haste to reply.

“Ye may speak to me, friend, without the least disgrace,” I said, “I do assure you, for there’s nought of merchandising ware in this bit wallet, as ye may see by its small size; nor have I the least occasion to degrade myself by trade or traffic,

being myself an independent gentleman, travelling for my own pleasure; but as I am rather partial to a change of linen now and then, I just carry the same in the bit wallet under my oxter, which is quite light, an' but sma' inconvenience ye see."

"Ye're a must pleasant, discreet shentleman, I perceive," said the man, putting up the back of his hand to his bonnet after his military fashion, in honour of me, and no doubt quite taken with my manner.

"I have observed," I continued, "a remarkably handsome yoting man, who I think acts as lieutenant of your company; and am, to be candid with you, curious to know something of him. Can you tell me who he is, *et cætera*?" and I, at the same time, most politely offered the Highland soldier a refreshment for his nose, from my silver snuff-box.

"Got bless my soul!" exclaimed the man, "I knew what ye was going to spoke before ever ye said it! Every body speers after our pretty Colin Grant. He's the pride o' the regiment, an o'

the whole shire o' Sunderland. Money a lady'll sigh and set by her supper, when he's marriet !”

“ Is he going to be married then ?” I inquired :
“ Why, he is but a very young man.”

“ If he were ever sae young,” said the soldier, “ he's gaun to make *one* lady happy next week ! He canna be married to them a', puir child ! although the ladies are perfect mad for him ! but Marion Chisholm will get him, an' none else ; an' such a doing as Lieutenant Grant's wedding, has na been done in the regiment since the back bane o' the auld thirty-twa was formed on the braes o' Badenoch, out o' naebody but Highland shentlemans !”

“ It will be a great doing, no doubt,” said I, thoughtfully ; “ and when do you say, friend, it will take place ?”

“ Just the day beyont the morn, an' a week after that, as I said before,” answered the Highlandman : “ an' the whole town is talking o' the marriage o' Colin Grant an' bonnie Marion Chisholm, for it has been fixed these three years ; and

every man in the regiment, parson an a', will get fou on the head o't, Sir: I tell you the truth."

The information of the Highland soldier, determined me in five minutes to a bold step.—"I'll see this wedding," said I within myself: "I'll stay in this town of Inverness until I do see it, if sister Margery at home should dance alone before the cat with rage!—I've seen enough of sad and sorrowful things in the world, and I'll stay and have the pleasure of seeing the happiness of this pretty couple; and I'll see the bride too, that I am determined."

Having formed this resolution within myself, after a little farther civility with the decent Highlander, I partook of a parting snuff from his mull, and away I went to look for a lodging.

"I never yet have found any difficulty in getting a desirable lodging in any strange place wherever I have travelled; people being, although I myself say it, quite taken with my way and appearance; and so, in less than an hour, my wallet and I were comfortably established in a front room, up two pair of stairs, in the house of a decent

talkative woman, who spoke excellent English, a Mrs. M'Pherson; and what was more remarkable, the house was almost opposite to that of the young lady's family who was about to be married to the handsome Highland officer, who had from the first so much interested me.

Having sent home for a remittance of cash, I spent more than ten days in and about Inverness, in the pleasantest manner possible; for it was so new to me to live in a considerable town, where the spirit of the people was not spoilt by trade and cheating, and where there was nothing but independent gentry, military, and homely highland people, the thankful dependents upon their natural superiors, that I was quite delighted with every body I met; for I found that the very tone of the people was kindly, and their ideas almost romantic; nor did they seem at all like those of the same condition in the southern part of the island, ready to worry each other, or to bite off each other's noses, for money. In short, what with climbing the romantic hills which rise up from immediately behind the houses of the town—what with the martial sounds and constant stir of

the Highland army, in and near the place; what with the marchings from Fort George, and along the magnificent lake, called the Moray Firth; and what with the kind highland women, who went, one and all, bare-headed to kirk and market, I was quite charmed.

Yet still there was in the delighted eyes (as I watched them from the window), and the daily visits and nightly walks of the Highland officer and his triumphant bride, something that interested me exceedingly; and I rejoiced in my spirit over the contemplation of the joy of young hearts, and this solacing picture of earth's rare felicity. I saw them steal out in the evening to enjoy their walk up the great glen of Scotland, as it is called, which stretches out near the town, I often observed, from my window, their lingering return, in the obscurity of the summer evenings; their slow parting at the door; their fond whisper, and their sighing good night! and I myself began to count the days when marriage should entitle them to unlimited enjoyment of each other's society, and when closing night should no more remind them of separation.

My good highland landlady was as much interested in the marriage of the peerless couple as I was. In fact, it was the talk, not only of the regiment, but of the whole town ; and on the morning, when the bride and her sister, and the Lieutenant himself, went up the street together, to purchase the wedding trinkets, and the ring for her finger, and certain silks and laces no doubt, every window in the street was up, for all had heard of the purpose of their joint movement; and the blessings of the old, and the envyings of the young, accompanied them as far as they could be seen by the admiring people. The interest that was created, and the admiration that was given to these wedding fineries by the women, it is beyond my powers to describe. She that was favoured with even a sight of them, was an object of envy in the neighbourhood ; but several of the females, by degrees, obtained that privilege ; for it was said, that the bride, or at least her sister, did not disguise the delight they felt in exhibiting the marriage dresses and jewels.

CHAPTER II.

THE day previous to that appointed for the wedding at length came round, and the interest of all in the neighbourhood, about all that concerned the young couple, increased hourly in intensity; and it is to this interest, which enabled them to learn almost every circumstance which passed between the pair, that I am indebted for all the particulars of what subsequently took place.

It happened, at this period, that some public occurrence (what it was I now forget), requiring a subaltern's guard in the town, it fell to Lieutenant Grant's turn; for either there was a promise, or some previous arrangement had been made, so that he was obliged to be on guard in the old guard-house, under the Tolbooth at the Cross, on this very night, prior to his wedding; and, before he went to his duty in the evening, he called at the house

to spend a few minutes with his bride. He was sitting with her and her sister, in an apartment, the windows of which looked towards Fort George, and his Marion remarked, while talking of the high spirits and hilarity he had shown on the evening previous, that this night he looked strangely restless and thoughtful, and once or twice inquired after her health with a penetrating anxiety, as if she complained of illness, although she assured him she had never been better in her life.

“Why, Colin,” she said, in reply to his repeated inquiries, “why think about my health just now? Have you any particular reason for this unusual solicitude.”

“No,” said he, “none at all; but, isn’t it strange that my mother should not have arrived?” he added, waving her question, “it draws so near the time.”

“I confess that it is a little strange;” said the bride, “but some delay may have occurred, and she will be here, no doubt, in time to-morrow.”

“You are happy and hopeful;” he only said, pressing her hand, and looking at her with a

smile that scarcely appeared genuine ; “ and we are all full of hopes, and wishes, and anticipations, my Marion. Now, sweet love, look only as delightful to-morrow as you do to-day, and all Inverness will say, never did so pretty a bride stand before the altar, in the old church below, with a happy young soldier.”

“ But you speak all this, Colin,” she said, “ in a tone that has more of melancholy and solicitude in it than agrees with the words you express. Have you any thing to tell me of, that is of importance enough to trouble your thoughts ? if so, do inform me of it.”

“ I have nothing to tell you, indeed ; nothing, I assure you, my sweet Marion ;” he said. “ Yet, surely, the air is somewhat thick, this evening, and oppressive ;” and again he knitted his brows, as if to stifle some inward feeling, and looked anxiously out upon the sky, and then in her face.

“ Gracious powers, Colin !” she exclaimed, “ your look has an ominous restlessness in it. You are concealing something from me.”

“ By heavens I am not, Marion. I have no-

thing to tell you, on my life! unless it be worth telling, or rather confessing, as a weakness, that I have had all day an involuntary anxiety over me, and I know not about what. But, sometimes, it has assumed a strange solicitude about yourself, as if there was some reason to fear that something was about to happen to you. And a feeling, that I never before experienced, came over me, at times, on looking around over the green hills of Ross-shire, and then upwards to the heavens; for I sometimes thought that the very sky had changed its colour to me!"

"Colin!" she said, looking seriously in his countenance, "there is something alarming in these fancies, the very day before our marriage."

"Pooh, Marion! no; they are not worth a thought," he said; "we are all liable to involuntary impressions, I suppose. But I know what is the cause of these odd notions. I see it clearly."

"What then is it, Colin? pray be explicit."

"It is merely the near prospect of the consummation of all my hopes, of making you entirely mine, Marion, that is too much for me to dwell

upon. But now the hour for my duty has arrived, and I must leave you. Farewell, for one brief night! Angels attend you, my sweet girl!" and, pressing her hand, he rushed hurriedly out to his night's duty.

What it was that affected her at the youth's departure Marion could not tell; but she had felt so much joy and triumph of late, that, when the chord of serious feeling was touched by the unlooked for state of mind that her lover had shown, it vibrated to her inmost heart; and the pleasing prospect of being his on the morrow, without apprehension from henceforth, overpowered her as she sat alone in the twilight; and melting into that resource of the feelings which always gives a maiden relief, she was found by her sister, on her entrance, drowned in sweet refreshing tears.

Whatever it was that had affected the mind of the young Highlander, which was somewhat imaginative, a thing not uncommon to an ardent youth, reared among the mountains of the north, he found a sudden relief in this confession to his bride, and marched towards the old guard-house, under the

Tolbooth, where his night was to be principally spent, in revived, and even high spirits.

When the duties of the early part of the night were over, and he was left to himself in the inner guard-room, he was observed to become again thoughtful; but a languor came over him, his spirits seemed to be overpowered, and, stretching himself upon the mattress, which is the common accommodation of the place, he fell into a dozing and disturbed sleep.

Towards midnight, he awakened with a start, such as to attract the observation of the sergeant and others near him; and then sitting up and laying his head thoughtfully down on his hands, he sat for some time in meditation; then rising, he went out hastily, as if to relieve himself of some mental impression by breathing the cool air. What he had seen in his dream, or what cause he had for the anxious state of his mind, was not known, but he was observed to rush quickly forth towards the dwelling of his bride, as if oppressed with some apprehension regarding her safety.

When he arrived at her house, and looked up at

the windows, on which the moon shone brightly, all seemed as usual, still and quiet. He paced for some time backwards and forwards, opposite to her door, wondering why he should have been impelled to come here by his own thoughts, and yet ashamed to knock or expose his foolish anxiety, by making any inquiry at this unseasonable hour. He went round by a lane to the rear of the house, merely to look at the chamber window of his beloved. A light still burned in the chamber, the upper part of the shutters were unclosed, and the lower loosely laid together, as if some of the inmates had been lately looking out. There was nothing remarkable in this, for it was still scarcely past midnight; the two sisters might be reading together, as they often did; and they might have left the shutters unclosed, to enjoy, occasionally, the contemplation of the hills lying behind Inverness, in the clear moonlight, and the effect of the ruins of Macbeth's Castle, which rise up on a hill in the near distance.

The young officer, however, leaped up upon the garden wall, where he had often, years before,

come by stealth to meet or to wait for his Marion. The recollections were rapturous, the prospect at this moment, under the bright moon, was glorious ; and yet he felt ashamed of his present position, and the unaccountable feeling which led to it. But as he was here, he tried to catch a glimpse of his bride, for the chamber window was quite near ; or perhaps he might hear her voice, and assure himself that his ominous impressions did not relate to her.

He made a slight noise as he stood up on tiptoe. He heard a movement within. A figure in white opened the shutters of the window, and on looking out gave a slight scream. It was Marion ; he waved his hand and beckoned to her ; her sister, who had been with her, came also forward. They stood together for a moment in uncertainty, and then threw up the sash.

“ It is only I, Marion,” said young Grant, smiling, “ do not be alarmed.”

“ Colin, is that really you ? What is the matter ?” she said, anxiously. “ What has caused you to climb the garden wall at this strange hour ?”

“ I know not,” he said, “ unless it be to see you once more. I hope I have not disturbed you ?”

“ To see me once more, Colin !” she repeated, surprised. “ What can you mean by this strangeness all the evening ? I thought you were on duty.”

“ So I am ; but I run all the risk to come here ; I couldn't help it ; but don't think of it, Marion ; I see you are safe and well, and I am happy ; so go to bed, my love. Why do you sit up so late ? I will be with you in the morning. God bless you !”

“ God bless you, Colin ! Bless you ! Bless you !” she went on, kissing her hand, in answer to him as he prepared to leap the wall. “ Remember we breakfast at nine.” And, with many kind adieus, he sprang down and she closed the window shutters.

“ Is'nt this altogether very odd of Colin ?” said the alarmed young lady, to her sister, when they had left the window.

“ Yes, it is—but love is a very odd thing I see,” was the other's reply ; “ but I tell you what,

Marion, I hope you will be able to keep Colin Grant from night-walking, when you get him home to yourself."

"Oh! fy, Flora!" said the happy girl, playfully; and the innocent sisters retired to bed.

The young man made his way back to his duty, with a firm step and light spirits, though blaming himself for his folly; and laughing, within himself, when he thought what all his moonlight adventure had ended in. His thoughts were so much taken up, however, with anticipations of the important events of the new day, and his approaching happiness, that he could not spend any more of the night in sleep.

The morning of his wedding day soon dawned, calm and pleasant, and as it advanced, became even unusually sunny and inviting. His duty being over, and having yet two or three hours to dispose of, before the time when he was to breakfast with his bride, he wandered forth to enjoy the morning air, on the banks of the Moray Firth, betwixt the town of Inverness and Fort George. As he was returning back, and drawing near to

the ferry, which is the usual crossing to the opposite shore of the Firth in Rosshire, he found himself hailed by three of his brother officers, in their morning dresses, attended by the black servant of one of them, who seemed to be enjoying themselves in some party of pleasure, and who bantering him on his solitary mood, on this his wedding morning, persuaded him to accompany them, and to spend an hour with them in their intended amusement, and his spirits being now high and flowing, as usual, forward the whole party went together.

CHAPTER III.

“ARE you not going to get up, Mr. Balgownie?” said my landlady to me on the same morning, coming familiarly into my bed-room, honest woman: “the morning is perfect pleasurable; and don’t ye remember, that this is the wedding day of the handsome Highland officer, that ye’ve been so raptured about. Ea! Mr. Balgownie, what would many a wealthy lady gi’e to be Marion Chisholm this blessed morning?”

“Ay, just so, Mrs. M’Pherson,” said I, pulling off my nightcap, to assist my waking; “the ladies are always wishing for something, no doubt.”

“Now just get up, Sir,” continued the honest woman, coming near to my bedside, with a seductive good-nature, “and step down the street, and bring my daughter and myself all the news you can gather about the forthcoming wedding.”

Accordingly, I forthwith bestirred myself; and having accomplished my morning's buttonings, I set forth to make my observations about the joyful house of the pretty bride; and by means of my snuffbox, and my taking manner, to cull the sweets, and be the happy bearer of the most authentic scraps of the circumjacent gossip.

The very first thing that refreshed my highly-favoured eyes was a full and distinct view of the bride herself, who had come to her front windows alone, and was looking forth, in the youthful joy of her heart, on this fine summer morning, over the open expanse of the Moray Firth, towards Fort George, and across to the purple mountains of Ross-shire: for the space before her house was not then built up, and the view was both extensive and delightful.

She came, as I said, to the window, with all the carelessness of innocence, and seemed to gaze on her native hills with the glowing admiration of a romantic maiden, while I stood looking up from the road beneath, delighted at the opportunity of contemplating her who was soon to be the bride of

the youth who had so strongly attracted my interest from the first moment, and whose wedding was now the talk of high and low in the whole place. She appeared more delicate in her form, and more thoughtful in her look, than I had thought was the case from my previous observation. But the bust and the waist, as shown in her simple morning dress, were what I need not say much about now. I know when a woman is squeezed and put out of shape, perfectly well; but I know also what delicate grace nature sometimes offers to the eye of the painter or poet, who know what to look at and what to turn away from. The hair of the bride was fair, as is usual with the maidens of the north; but her beauty was altogether of a more delicate order. She saw me looking up towards her, and turned her light blue eyes down upon me for a little, with perfect modesty, and yet with perfect ease. I am proud, even now, of the look she bestowed upon me: alas! there is a species of pleasure in calling up the indelible impressions made by the fairest forms which we may have seen on the earth, although

connected, perhaps, with the saddest events which our recollections may have to dwell upon, from our experience in an uncertain world.

I cannot tell what it was that impressed me, but a disposition to serious musing came over my spirit as I went along, thinking of the interesting form of the bride, which even mixed with my sympathetic pleasure in the consideration that this was her wedding day. As I thought of the long life that her fine Highland officer and herself might enjoy together, and the various scenes they might witness, until the ultimate termination of all earth's happiness ;—by some peculiar association of fancy, the old Highland custom, of the young married woman beginning her duties, as a wife, by spinning her own winding-sheet, struck strangely and involuntarily upon my spirit, in my mixed meditations.

Some impulse, I know not what, impelled me to turn my steps, after passing the Cross, down Church Street, towards the ferry, although it was a way I seldom went. I passed the old church, an ugly, heavy pile, and wandered on towards the

large burying-ground, called the chapel yard ; and, as I passed on, I had observed some persons running up the street, and people coming out of the doors, and talking to them, with looks of consternation ; but I was so absorbed in my meditations, at the time, that I took no heed. I had stepped into the burying-ground, which was open, and there being something at the time erecting by the wall, I mounted for the view, and was admiring the magnificent prospect all around ; the two noble Firths on each hand, above and beneath the town, and the glorious mountains, and fir belts, and green hollows, and villas of Ross-shire, in front ; when, casting my eyes down upon the ferry, and along the edge of the Moray Firth, I saw a crowd on the shore, and people running hastily from the town towards the water.

A sensation of horror, for which I could not account, smote upon my heart at the sight ; for somehow, at that moment, the idea of some appalling disaster, and the image of the Highland officer, came anxiously across my spirit, and troubled my thoughts, as I stepped hastily down to-

wards the Firth. By this time numbers were running from the town towards the water; and I perceived, by the shore being lined with people, that some one had been either just drowned, or was in imminent danger; but the looks of consternation and alarm of the people were even more than such an event, not uncommon at Inverness ferry, could have justified. But my own mind was not less affected when, as I got into the crowd, I found the Highland women, after their fashion, clapping their hands in lamentation, and stamping with their feet, while they exclaimed, "The bonnie captain! the handsome captain! Colin Grant, the young bridegroom!" while they pointed to the quiet waters of the Firth, with looks of impatient agony and horror, under which he now lay struggling in suffocation.

Presently a black man was seen running towards the shore, with several persons after him. This man, it appeared, was the servant of one of the officers, who now stood distractedly on the shore, half dressed; and who, after having tried every effort to save their companion, had, after the

first alarm, sent for the man to dive under water, and, if possible, bring him up, the unfortunate Grant having sunk for the last time.

The servant, throwing off most of his clothes, and plunging into the water, was long lost sight of while diving for him; during which time the people, with which the shore was completely clad, stood waiting the result with distracting apprehension. The man came up to breathe; but, when it was observed that he was alone, a groan of impatient disappointment ran through the multitude. It was more difficult to find the unhappy youth than had been supposed; for, although the place where he had gone down was not generally deep, this part of the shore was full of holes made in the sand, which, when covered with the tide, as was now the case, made the spot highly dangerous. The man went down a second time. I could not believe my senses, as I stood contemplating the still and glassy surface of the clear waters, that beneath them lay, perhaps already a corpse, the interesting youth, whose bride waited for him to lead her to the altar this very morning.

At length a slight ripple appeared on the water, nearly in shore ; and, presently, a black head bolted up, and then a white arm and shoulder entwined in that of the African, while a thrilling shudder of feeling ran through the assembled crowd. A stroke or two of swimming brought the man, and the body which he bore, to the edge. Never shall I forget my sensations, nor the sympathetic murmur of the multitude, as the beautiful form of the lifeless youth was gradually brought out of the water in the arms of the black man, the head dropping back over his shoulder, the eyes closed, the face placid and mild, like a sleeping infant, and the ruddy white skin contrasted with the sable appearance of the blackamoor.

No symptom of life remained ; the perfectly formed limbs, as white as marble, hung, in the loose nervelessness of apparent death, over the black man : but when the body was brought out upon the bank, and his brother officers, who stood distractedly waiting the result, and the near bystanders, saw the deathlike expression on that beautiful manly countenance, the murmur of hor-

ror, which ran through the whole, increased, until it burst forth from the women in a howl of lamentation that would have pierced any heart to hear it.

It was now breakfast hour, and the happy family of the Chisholms were dressed, from the youngest to the eldest, and only waited for the centre of all their hopes and affections, the handsome Colin Grant. The time when he was to have come was now past; and Marion began to be impatient, and to listen for his knock, and then to turn her head often towards the window, with an anxious and flurried look. The old lady, her mother, who sat with parental pride at the table, with her daughters, exhorted Marion not to be anxious; saying, complacently, that some trifling circumstance had doubtless occurred to cause delay; and mildly reminded the fearful girl, that young people often suffered unnecessarily from a foolish impatience.

The whole house soon became seriously alarmed; and Marion's restlessness and ominous dread increased every moment, until, as she continued to watch the clock, and thought of Colin's strange

behaviour the preceding night, and of what the day was designed to bring forth, her impatience and nervous fears amounted almost to frenzy. She sent out messengers. She rose up and watched at the window. She saw many people running down the street, as if some alarming event was going forward; and some stood still, as they passed, and looked up at the windows, and, on noticing her, clasped their hands together, and shook their heads, as if heart-struck at the sight.

At length a knock was heard at the door—a single knock: it was the lieutenant's servant: he entered the house with a wild and horror stricken countenance, that made all within afraid to ask him what woful tidings he was the bearer of. But yet their impatience was dreadful; and all he was able to articulate was the broken exclamations of highland admiration and attachment, of "My master! my beautiful master! my gallant Grant! But he'll maybe come alive again. He *maun* come alive, and be marriest yet. It canna be, that my master is dead—dead! He *will* come alive, and be marriest to Miss Marion Chisholm! Oh! alas!"

and the poor fellow screamed about the house in his distress, while every one was now in a state of absolute distraction.

After some time they were able to get out of the incoherent servant, that his master had been persuaded by some of his brother officers to bathe with them in the Firth, at a place called the Longman, below Kessock Ferry; that he had gone in with reluctance, and after the others, but being once in, remained swimming about, and seeming to enjoy his bath, in the clear element, long after the others had gone to the bank. He was not far from the shore; and at length a brother officer called to him hastily to come out; for some apprehension at the moment struck him, from the manner in which the youth seemed to struggle in the water. He called again, and the other officers joined in begging Grant to swim out; but by this time he began to lie motionless on the water, and in an instant after sank quite out of sight.

An alarm was quickly given; but horror, at the bare idea of any thing happening to their favourite Colin Grant, seemed to paralyze his comrades; they were afraid to venture in to his assistance,

and were only able to shout distractedly for help ; and, in particular, for the black servant, who was known to be an extraordinary swimmer. Those who remained behind, keeping their eyes fixed upon the water, suddenly observed poor Grant's head rise up ! They shouted with hope : the youth gave a gasp or two, as he looked towards the shore, but seemed to be stupified ; for, after a moment, throwing up both his arms, he sunk again, and totally disappeared.

All that the servant could add to this intelligence was, that after the body had been brought out by the black man, the surgeon, who was by this time in attendance, and to whose house he had since been taken, had given considerable hopes of his recovery. “ And he *must* come alive ! ” exclaimed the man ; as if he would threaten heaven, if his master was not restored ! “ He *shall* come alive ! for I'm to march wi' him myself to the hills of Cromarty ; an' he'll march yet, an' his bonnie bride'll get him hame to herself ! Och ! och ! ha'e patience ladies ! ” and the man raved about the house, and ran out like a madman, to ascertain the ultimate fate of his beloved master.

In the midst of this scene of distraction, a carriage stopped at the door, and the mother of Colin Grant was announced, who had at length come to Inverness, in high spirits and dressed in her richest, to be present at the wedding of her favourite son. She entered the house with an air of Highland state; but she gazed round her with astonishment; for, instead of the congratulation that she had anticipated, every one seemed to avoid her. Even the looks of the servants presented an appearance of dismay; and low sobs and exclamations reached her ears from a distance, as she waited to receive the embrace of the bride.

“What means all this? what is the matter? where is my son? what have you done with Colin Grant?” successively exclaimed the lady, while no one had the courage to relate the dreadful tidings.

In a moment she rushed up stairs, and found the whole family in a state not to be described, excepting the bride, whose look of calm despair, as she sat alone in the shade of the window-curtain, was the most appalling sight of the whole.

It is not in the power of language to describe

the horror and grief of the unhappy lady, when she was at length informed of this fearful event ; but still Mrs. Chisholm endeavoured to support herself and her distressed circle, by holding out sanguine expectations, that the efforts of the surgeon would be successful, in the resuscitation of the beloved youth ; and messenger after messenger was despatched to bring tidings to the family.

The first messenger brought hopes : the second brought hopes augmented. The third was the bearer of more cheering still ; and the perseverance of the medical men in their endeavours was thought an additional ground for increased hope ; but the suspense, during these intervals of consolation, was most intolerable, and became so dreadful at length to the unhappy bride, that it required main force to prevent her rushing out to the house where her beloved lay, in the hands of those who still thought to revive the spark of life, before the spirit had fled for ever.

A long space of time elapsed before another message arrived ; but that message was final : for the three persons who had been sent arrived

together, accompanied by several of the officers of the regiment, with the sad tidings that all was over! and that, after a perseverance in efforts which nothing save the reluctance to admit that Colin Grant could be lost to the world, would have justified, he was, with many despairing gestures and exclamations, totally given up to death and the grave! and all returned to their homes in moody and melancholy silence: for still the thought seemed too horrible to entertain, that the handsome bridegroom officer, their dear Colin Grant, was never more to be seen parading with his company, or walking through the streets of Inverness.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE are some occurrences which take place in this uncertain life, upon which even description is wasted. No one can tell what passed in the house we have been speaking of for four days after this terrible event; nor what were the sufferings of the bereaved bride, while Colin Grant lay a corpse in Fort George; for thither the zeal of his brother officers had removed him, on his being pronounced beyond hope of recovery, on that ill fated morning. Even the town of Inverness seemed unlike the same place. A dull silence hung over the deserted streets, and the people went about their avocations sad and thoughtful, as if the whole neighbourhood was suffering under a public calamity.

Without the town, at Fort George, where the remains of the youth lay, an unusual silence and

gloom prevailed over the garrison; the officers, old and young, as they passed under the window, looked up with a moralizing sadness, lamenting the uncertainty of youthful prospects; and the solitary sentinel, as he paced to and fro on his brief walk, and listened to the roaring of the surrounding sea, pondered moodily on the fate of the regiment's pride, now lying a cold corpse above him, which only waited the melancholy morning when, with the sincere lamentations of genuine attachment, it was to be consigned to the dust.

Little did I think, when I made up my mind to tarry for a time in Inverness, that I should be a witness of the funeral of the brave Highland officer who at first caught my attention—and such a funeral! the like has not been seen in the incomparably situated town of Inverness from that day to the present. The whole of the battalion followed Colin Grant to the grave, as well as all the gentlemen of the neighbourhood; for consternation and sorrow seemed to have affected every heart. Nearly the whole road from Fort George into Inverness, a distance of ten miles, was lined with

people early in the morning, waiting the approach of the funeral; and what was strangely painful, the procession was obliged to pass the very door of the broken-hearted bride.

I saw the whole sad business myself! I observed the long line of the military as they approached the crowded streets of the town. I heard the first solemn roll of the muffled drums, in the outskirts, as they drew near, and the slow wailing sound of the funeral dirge: and the single stroke, at distant intervals, on the great drum, seemed to smite home to every heart among the multitude, as it echoed through the streets and from the hills above. There was a dead and tacit silence all around: the procession moved so slowly, and with so little noise that you might have heard even a whisper, during the intervals between the melancholy sound of the drum and the doleful Highland air, which, being a strain of peculiar wildness and Celtic character, would have excited tears, even on a less sad occasion than the present.

Forward, at length, approached the men of his

own company; who, with muskets inverted, were to fire over his grave. I almost feared the effect, when the coffin and pall, on which were laid the bonnet and feathers, with the sword and sash of the young man, drew near the house of Marion Chisholm, for the people sobbed aloud on every side of me, and the tears stole down the cheeks of even the hardy soldiers who followed in the sad procession; but when the corpse came quite opposite the door of her who was to have been his bride, the roll of the drum at the very moment, while every eye was turned toward the window, so electrified the crowd, which was chiefly composed of females, that a spontaneous howl of sorrow burst from each heart, which echoing through the street drowned the funeral strain of the band, till it subsided into the *ulaloo* of the original Highland Coronach, or cry for the dead; which was kept up the whole way, until the corpse arrived at the place of interment.

The effect of this, and of the whole scene, on my nerves, I shall never forget, as the corpse of Colin Grant moved on towards the Cross of Inverness.

The wail of the women's voices in the Coronach, rising in the air, sounded down the street, and, receding in the distance, mingled with the murmuring strain of the pathetic Highland air from the band, which lingered on the ear in its sadness. The indistinct sound of the muffled drum struck to my very heart; in short, the whole scene so affected me that I melted, in spite of myself, in sympathetic sorrow with those who wept on every side of me, and sobbed, like a child, in genuine grief for the hapless and early fate of my handsome Highland officer. I looked, as every one else did, at the closed windows and death-like appearance of the house where Marion Chisholm dwelt. What passed within, on this sorrowful morning, is almost too sacred, and almost too painful for me to narrate.

Ever since the period when Marion first learned the fate of her expected bridegroom, the grief which, in all the other inmates of the house, particularly in Colin's mother, had shown itself in loud lamentations, seemed in her to have had quite a different effect; for she neither spoke, nor com-

plained, nor did a tear moisten her eye. But she could not be prevailed on to move from the seat, in the recess of the window, where she was first discovered. During the five nights on which he lay a corpse, she neither undressed nor went to her chamber. She scarcely uttered a word; but, wringing her hands in bitter anguish, she kept constantly repeating, "When I am dead be sure you lay me by the side of my bonny Colin Grant."

The roll of the funeral drum was now heard; and, as the music approached, her countenance assumed an expression which those around her could not bear to look at. She rose from her seat in the rear of the house, and was with difficulty prevented from springing out, and throwing herself on the coffin; and her expressions of hopeless grief and maiden sorrow are not to be repeated. She, after some effort, sat down again, as the sounds went off again in the distance, and listened nervously, with her face buried in her hands; for, when the corpse had reached to the principal burying-ground of the town, called the Chapel Yard, and the clergyman began to read the English

burial service, a silence more solemn than before reigned in the hushed and mourning town. During this interval there appeared something awful in the manner of the unhappy girl. But it was interrupted by a truly startling and impressive sound. It was the first volley of musketry that was fired over Colin Grant's grave, which, from the stillness which prevailed, seemed unusually loud, awakening the poor girl from her trance. She started up, and, looking wildly around her, inquired what noise it was. "But I know now," she said, smiling to herself, "they are firing guns over my Colin's grave. It is right that they should do him honour. He should have lain beside me, by my own side, and in my own arms, if he were not dead. Hah! there again!" she screamed, yet more wildly, as the second volley was fired, and reverberated off among the hills. "*Now* you will lay me beside my sweet Colin Grant, will you not?" and she grasped the hands of her sister and her mother, who stood weeping beside her. "There! there! the third and last!" she screamed: "it is all over

now ! now it dies away among the mountains—hark ! Oh, my poor heart !” then laying her hand on her heart, she fell back senseless into her distracted mother’s arms.

They laid her down upon the sofa, and watched over her. But she moved not ; it seemed as if the last shot over her lover’s grave had been the signal for her heart to break. In vain they listened to catch the sound of her breath, her spirit had fled for ever ! Her heart beat not. She was no more !

I could not help lingering in Inverness, that I might become a witness also of the funeral of Marion Chisholm, which took place on the fourth day after the former. All the officers of the thirty-second followed her to the grave ; and she was laid, by her desire, close to the side of her Colin Grant. That was another day of weeping and lamentation ; but, as far as I could learn, the ulaloo of the wild Coronach for the dead, has never been heard in the streets of Inverness from that day to this.

I left Inverness, on the same evening, with a sad and sore heart, and not without many painful re-

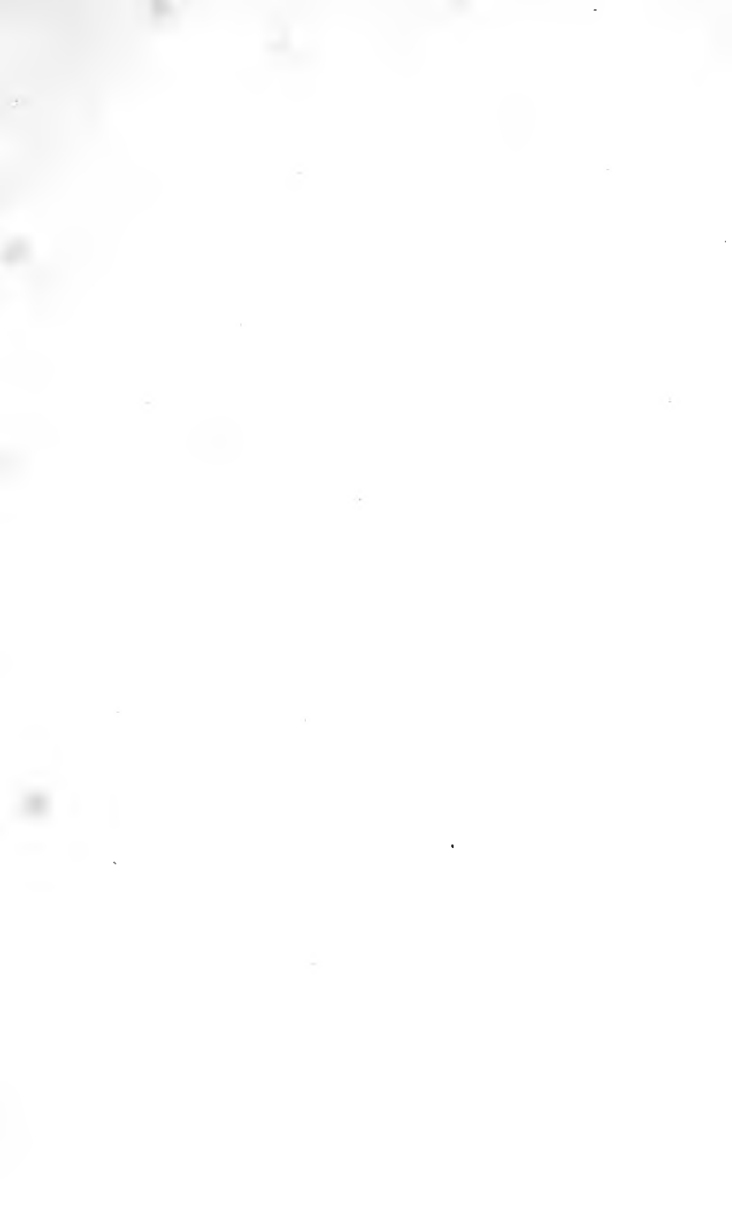
flections on the uncertainty of human prospects. I am glad my narrative is concluded, for much grief is distressing and oppressive even to the recollection.

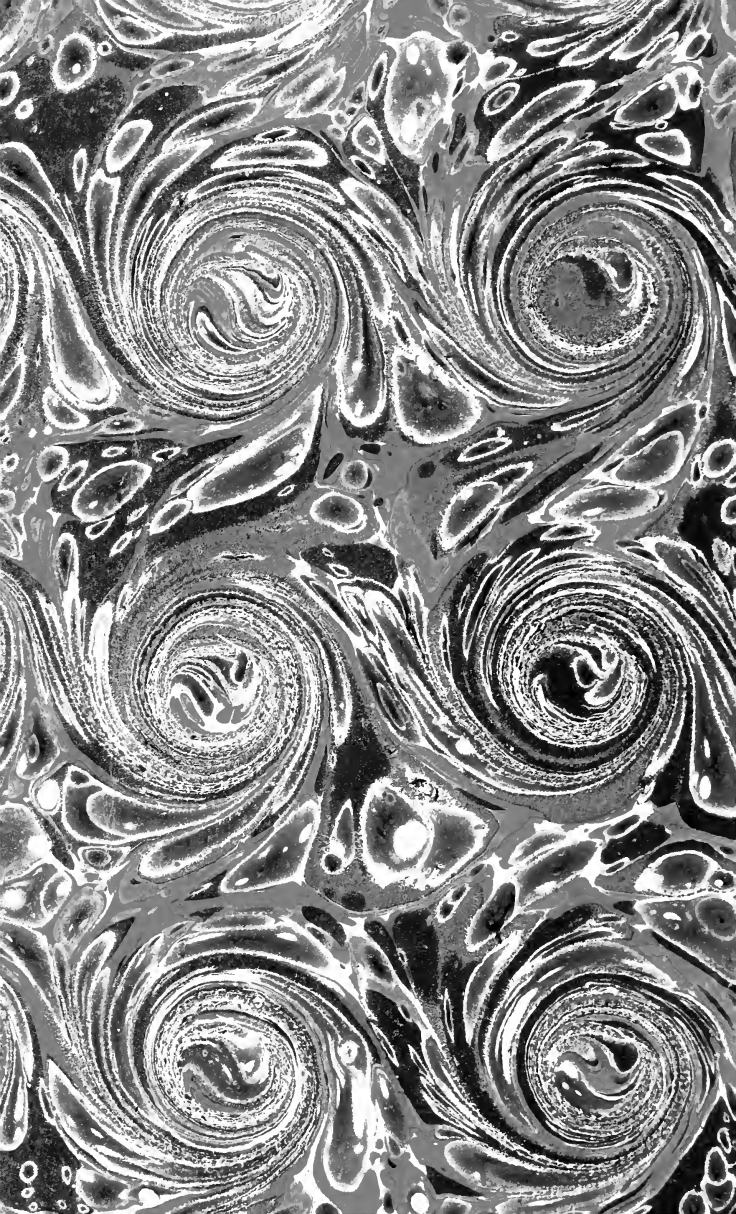
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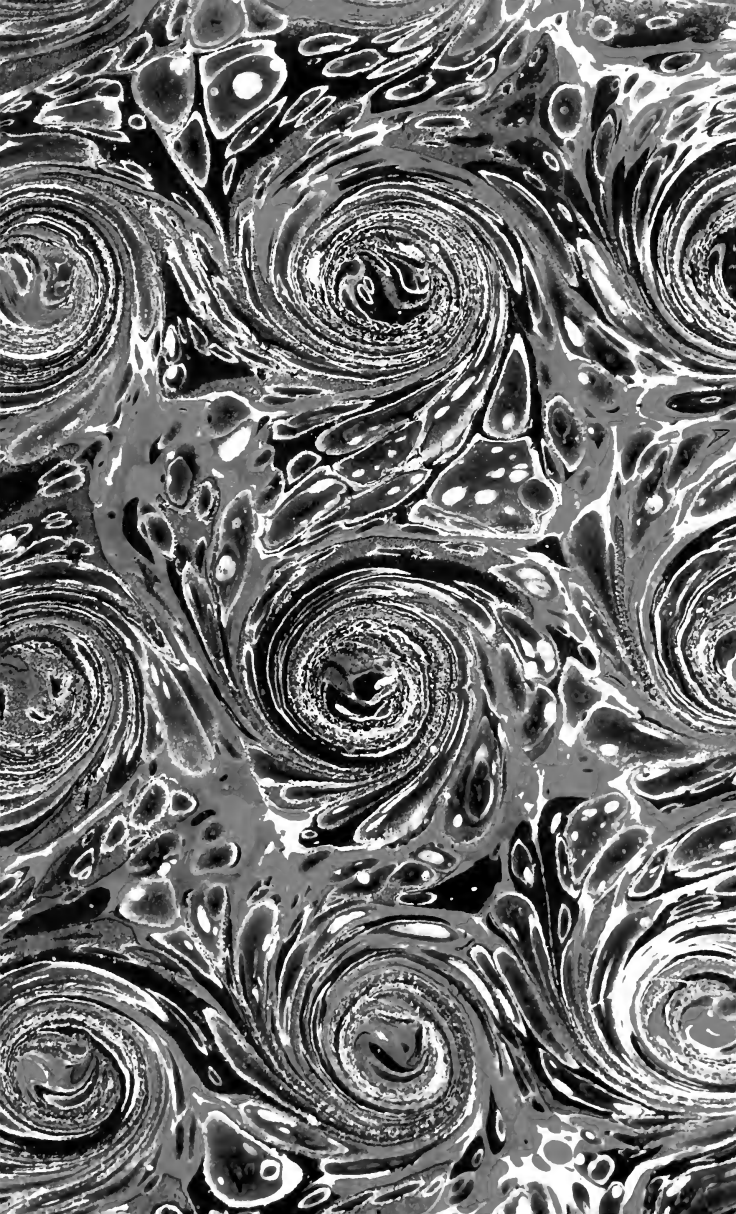
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